British officers in Indian Railways

Bossism in railways

The Railway men's report on Indian Railways

Presented to

The Ministry of Railways & the Railway Board.

By

[A Labour Class Employee of Indian Railways]

My intention is to bring a Qualitative

Change in the Administrative Hierarchy and Work Culture of Indian Railways.

Indian Railways-Lifeline of the nation

[AUGUST 2021]

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेसषु कदाचन
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोसत्वकर्मणि

KARMANYE VADHIKARASTE MAA PHALESHU KADACHANA
MAA KARMA PHALA HEY TUR BOOHOO MAATE SANGOSTWA KARMANI

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO PERFORM YOUR PRESCRIBED DUTY, BUT YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO THE FRUITS OF ACTION. NEVER CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE THE CAUSE OF THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIVITIES, AND NEVER BE ATTACHED TO NOT DOING YOUR DUTY. - BHAGAVAD GITA, CHAPTER II, VERSE 47

Dedicated to

[To my beloved Indian Railway Fellow Colleagues]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank all the Indian Railway UPSC officers whom I came across, who have clearly shown me how Bossism/ authoritarianism/ discrimination is rampant across the board, at every level in the Indian railway administration, who provided me with daily dose of motivation by their deeds, which compelled me to bring this up. And to all my colleagues who taught me to say 'ok sir', 'yes sir', 'noted sir',' duly noted sir',' sure sir', 'noted please', 'I will learn sir', 'I will complete sir'..... Because officers are used to those words, which satisfies their ego. To those who told me to "Switch off your mind, to do what the officer orders you to do". And to those who taught me the railway working trade mantras, "Just follow your predecessor's footsteps", "Don't take the officers' shunting seriously"," Turn the page learn the trade" and "If you want a Peace of Mind then be cool, Coolness matters a lot to handle work pressure in railways".

RED HAS MANY MEANINGS, YOUTH CAN MAKE IT MORE MEANINGFUL.

There are a few who stand up. They anchor the hope for others. Please support them.

Declaration

I certify that

1. I have no intention to spoil the reputation of Indian Railways. I hope this does not disturb the harmony of the Indian railways. I totally respect the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Indian Railways.
2. I have no personal grudge against any railway officer. The only problem I have is with the railway administrative system, which has vested all the powers into officers' hands and made them demigods. Officers are just taking advantage of it.
3. Every other employee in the railway may not be feeling the same, these are just my personal opinions/experiences which I have faced in IR. Hope this report reflects the agony of every railway employee.
4. I am presenting to you a generalized opinion about the railway officers, not all officers are bad. There are many officers, whom we can look up-to, who have set the bar too high. The indifferent and casual attitude of certain officers spoils the work environment.
5. This is not any fabricated/self-made report/story with a hidden agenda, it is a reflection of railway working culture. Here I will be addressing only from the engineering/technical perspective, as I am not familiar with non-engineering/non-technical working.
6. My intention is to expose the hypocrisy of the officers and working culture in Indian railways. I am not making any derogatory statements, just bringing up the facts. Let's call a spade a spade. I may be a bit biased towards the labour/working class employees because I am one of them.
7. Not a single day has passed, 'worrying about why I had joined the Indian Railway', this is not the railway working culture I had imagined, feels like I am stuck in this vicious cycle of slavery. The psychological trauma, I had gone through and the fear in me to work in this environment, compelled me to bring this up, and I don't have any vested interests.
8. The unemployment rate & Socio-Economic Inequality in India and our state of helplessness add up to this harassment. I hope at least this report serves as a bailout from these hardships.
9. I am so optimistic about IRMS, that it will address all the issues and puts a check to the departmentalism, British colonial legacy of centralized control, elitism and to a system of creating demigods. Consider this as a constructive criticism of the system not about any individual.
10. For outsiders who don't want all the nitty-gritty of the railways, the title is extremely apt and speaks a lot about the working style of Indian Railway administration.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IR- Indian Railways

LC- Labour Class

Officers- Generally UPSC Railway Officers

MOR- Ministry of Railways

INTRODUCTION

Indian Railways works as a service organisation and is responsible for easy, fast, affordable, and comfortable commutation of passengers & goods. The Rail ministry operates the state-owned Indian Railways, an organisation that operates as a monopoly in rail transport and is headed by the Chairman of the Railway Board. The country's economy is largely based on the smooth functioning of railways in India. Indian Railway is one of the gigantic public undertakings enriched with fixed assets. The network of railways is vast, spread all over India. Railways is the most preferred mode of transport. It not only integrates the social, economic and cultural foundation of the country but also is the giant facilitator in terms of employment opportunities. Indian railway is the largest employment provider in India, directly & indirectly. The year 2020 showed India a glimpse of how life would be without trains, Railways battled odds to keep Iron wheels rolling, India's lifeline running. As far as IR's performance is concerned, it cannot be denied that it has come a long way since 1950-51 in terms of number of trains and their carrying capacity, as well as in terms of the quantum of traffic carried. There still is, however, a wide gap between the supply side improvements and the demand side expectations, both in terms of speeds of trains and quality of services. Travelling in Indian railways is nostalgic for many of us, watching the terrains & landscapes through the window and drowning into deep thoughts. Whenever you feel lone & depressed, travel by train to just remind yourself that your problems are too small, just look at the world how beautiful and vast it is. 'One of the best ways to experience India is through the window of a train'.

- *'The Indian Railways will become the growth engine of the nation's 'Vikas Yatra''- PM Narendra Modi.*
- *"The Indian railway system will therefore become, in India, truly the forerunner of modern industry"- Karl Marx.*
- *"We do not see railways only as a means to travel. We see it as the backbone of India's development"- PM Narendra Modi.*
- *"In my view, Indian Railways has immense untapped potential"- Lalu Prasad Yadav.*

Indian railway is a massive organisation consisting of 12 Lakhs employees, 20 thousand officers, 17 Zonal Railways, 68 Divisions, Production units, Hospitals, Depots etc. For the smooth working of these massive units, Indian Railways is bifurcated into various departments. There are some Technical departments, some Non-Technical departments and a Medical department. The Technical departments are responsible for Smooth Running of Trains as per various technical parameters. The technical departments have a pool of Engineers ranging from Senior Section Engineer to Junior Engineer to Technicians to Group-D staffs. The workforce is distributed among various sub departments as per asset maintenance.

Technical Departments are further divided as follows:-

1. **Engineering department:-** It is one of the major departments of Indian Railways. It has the highest number of employees and maintains huge assets of railways. The construction & maintenance of railway stations, rails, sleepers, bridges, employee quarters, roads in colonies, water supply at station and railways colonies. The most important activity among them is the maintenance of tracks.
2. **Electrical Department-** The importance of Electrical engineering has increased manifold over the years. It is due to the massive electrification of various routes. Due to electrifications, the electrical engines were deployed in such sections which are again managed by the electrical department. Apart from this, the loco sheds were created for the maintenance of electric loco. Also, electrical engineers provide the general lighting facility at railway stations, colonies and trains.
3. **Signal and Telecom Department-** The signals are installed at stations for safe and smooth movement of trains. Signals ensure that many trains run on a daily basis in busy yards through the interlocking principle. Also, the telecommunication facilities such as telephone, internet, CCTV, public address system, coach guidance system are provided by this department.
4. **Mechanical Department-** The mechanical department ensures that the coaches and wagons are maintained to the fullest potentials. The overhauling of these is carried out in carriage and Wagons depots. There are various diesel engines which are maintained by the mechanical department. Apart from this, the Accident relief train (ART) is also maintained by the mechanical department.
5. **Stores Depot-** The stores depot in railways is a major department. It is the purchasing department. It purchases various day to day items as well as items of heavy machinery and other international purchases are carried out by them. Stores department is also responsible for the disposal of scrap and its selling.

NON-TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS:- the various non-technical departments carry out day to day running of trains, salary and pension issues, personal issues and security at stations. Various non-technical departments are:-

1. **Operating department**– The operating department is responsible for the punctual running of trains. It has station masters at stations and controllers in the control room to manage the train running. As railway earns mostly from goods trains, they also manage the running of goods trains. Also, they coordinate with various railway sidings for increasing railway revenue.
2. **Commercial department-** It is revenue collection department of Indian railways. They have TTE, booking clerk, reservation clerks under them. They also coordinate with advertisers and bring revenue to the railway. Recently many trains were branded by various companies these are carried out by the commercial department.

3. **Personal department-** They look after the staff issues. They are responsible for transfer posting, interaction with trade unions, and preparation of staff's salary, leave and encashment, issuing Pass/PTO. They have a major role of keeping the entire huge workforce of railways together.
4. **Accounts department-** It is a small department, but does most of the important functions. They are responsible for the passing of contract bills, salaries, maintaining railway books, calculating profit and loss and ensuring undue expenses in railways are avoided.
5. **Railway Protection Force-** It is a police force of Indian Railways. They are responsible for protecting the stations against all security issues. They check the unauthorized vendors, travellers etc. They also coordinate with state police for maintaining peace and harmony at railway premises.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT- The medical department consists of railway hospitals and other subunits for providing medical facilities to the railway's large workforce. They carry out the following functions:-

- To attend Railway accident & other untoward incidences
- To attend the hospital shift duties for attending to railway employees, officers their dependents.
- Pre-employment Medical examination to allow only fit & suitable candidates to join the services.
- PME (Periodical Medical Examination) of serving employees to allow fit persons to continue in those jobs which are related to the safe running of the train.
- To constantly check on the quality of drinking water and food made available at Railway Stations.
- Certification of dead bodies at Railway Station, Railway Yards, Railway line etc
- Certification of perishable goods in Railway Station about their disposal.

All the above departments work in close coordination with each other for smooth running of trains. There is no competition for railways in the market. As a result of this, there is a bit of a careless approach amongst the employees. The indifferent and casual attitude of certain officers spoils the work environment. We were witnessing the most inefficient, apathetic, arrogant, self-centered, egoism & corruption which were deeply ingrained inside the railway system. Railways thrive on bossism & Egotism, your boss can make your life hell. **Railway officers develop huge ego over years** & expect their subordinates to feed their egos. If one doesn't do so, one is doomed. A multi-headed beast with the power to devour anything whichever comes in their way. The colonial legacy of civil service in selecting 'one-exam wonders' is fundamentally flawed in that it usually catapults underserving people into positions of immense power. That actually makes them believe that they are there to 'rule' over people and not to 'serve' them. Giving them ultimate power and expecting them to be saints is foolish. This absolute power is making them tyrants. I wonder why **Bossism** and authoritarianism prevail in only departments which have adopted the British administrative model (Same is true in defence & police). Maybe it is due to too much centralization of power and tall hierarchy. It is the **colonial legacy** that the Civil Engineering department (the oldest &

largest department of IR) had inherited, and the other departments are trying to replicate the same. There is rarely any logic applied to take even the biggest decisions. The majority of the decisions are influenced by short-sightedness, egotism & individual interests, decisions are far removed from actual ground reality. Major interest is money (Commissions). An unwritten percentage system from top to bottom is followed in railways (Though every government body follows this, not unique to railways).

Historically, in India, the state has existed for the ruler, not for the ruled (State is the mind, its servants are the muscles). All the organs of the state (the armed forces, police, other government officials) existed essentially to oppress their own people first; that they could, at times, protect them from some external threat or depredations of criminals was only incidental. This identification with the rulers bred a very characteristic pattern of obnoxious behaviour in them; uncontrolled, impertinent, aggressive, rude, abusive, arrogant, barbarous, and brutish.

Railways still run on the age-old hierarchy set by the Britishers. They framed the rules to rule/control us, not to develop India. The work culture of Indian Railways during British time was autocratic. While Britishers were efficient administrators (Dictators) as evident from the railway infrastructure set up by them. There are no outside masters now, we are the masters of our own people. Gazetted officers of railways are still enjoying the legacy and royal treatment of the British era. Times have changed, but the impact of the British is still the same. These officers are also served royally on their duty. The attitude they develop over the years is too scary. If anyone want to see how British officers used to look, how they used to control/command Indians and how they ruled, then come to railways you can see them closely. We are so lucky to have a closer look at the British administrative functioning. British legacy in railways. 'Officer'- the colonial era term is also misleading the staff; it has to be changed to corporate terms. Officers are feeling like British lordships, **over estimating/exaggerating their positions**.

In a dysfunctional public transport system like railways with **extreme departmentalism**, where only power speaks and does things or can make things happen, power is needed. But this power is getting misused. When you are vested with powers, you have to exercise that power with diligence and dignity, judiciously. 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely', the railway officers are proving this statement right. Misuse of power is a basic human nature that is the reason for so many checks and balances in the system to control misuse of power.

BABU's culture in Government.

- *"Bureaucracy is the biggest obstacle to nations' development"- Pranab Mukherjee.*
- *"What will we achieve by handing over the country to Babus" - Narendra Modi.*
- *"You cannot run the country in air-conditioned rooms through Babus" -PM Modi*
- *"Bureaucracy is the art of making the possible impossible"- Javier Pascual Salcedo*
- *"Bureaucracy is the epoxy that greases the wheels of progress" - James Boren.*

We can blame civil service officers for being another form of British officers, but without them, the state can't run smoothly, as they are the government, they are 'the steel frame of India'. Ultimately, the non-performance of the bureaucracy is a problem of failed democracy.

Officer doesn't make any mistakes, only the subordinates does. All the Memos/charge sheets are given only to labour class employees. Oral warnings can work in most cases, as people are wise enough to understand their mistakes. Issue of the memo and punitive actions are the extreme solutions only in case of serious mistakes or misbehaviour. With inadequate staff, employees have to work under pressure, if anything goes wrong-they are issued with a Charge Sheet (held responsible). So employees are hesitant to do anything new. Railway administration is still holding the colonial past, servicing their own purposes. Running on old Feudal laws, run by the feudalistic mindset officers. **Less talent and big ego is very dangerous combination.** It's important to realize that structures aren't sacrosanct and there is a need to adapt to changing cultures culturally, procedural and structurally. India can't grow with the status quo.
This is exactly what is happening in the Indian railway administration.

- You create a system
- You protect that system
- You run the system
- You resist changes to the system
- You prevent 'others' into the system
- Now you rule the system.
- And claim victory (saying that none can perform better than us)

Absolutely cruel

Merely passing the orders down the hierarchal chain is not good enough you have to get involved. Leadership and management are both different. Everyone can do management with right skilled manpower working under him, but leading the team and motivating them to work proves your leadership skills. The fact that structures are not sacrosanct and need to adapt to the culture and the processes and not the other way around is also very important learning. Organizational reforms are indeed the way forward. As one of the most important and iconic institutions in the country, the Indian Railways plays a vital role in the lives of millions of people, and its employees work tirelessly to ensure that it continues to operate smoothly and effectively.

You can see a whole new India in railway with its own politics, (rules and regulations), discriminatory class system, social hierarchy, own infrastructure, own media, and own police force. I will give you a brief overview of Indian railways, how it really works, working culture, administration, politics, etc. Selected important areas i.e, recruitment and selection, training, promotion, transfer, motivation, morale, organizational structure, authority, responsibility, accountability, performance appraisal, communication and superior-subordinate relationship with respect to railway staff in India.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS IN RAILWAYS

During the nineteenth century, the recruitment for the superior cadres in railways was made in England and to the inferior categories by local administrations. At present Indian railway staff are recruited through UPSC (Group-A officers), LDCE (Group-B officers, only IR employees not from open market), RRB (Group-C staff), RRC/RRB (Group-D staff). Railways also recruit candidates from Scouts & Guides, Sports Quota, CG (Compassionate grounds), LARGESS scheme (Discontinued), on grounds of Cultural & Artistic talents. Earlier there used to be DRM/GM quota where they can recruit bungalow peons (mostly close relatives of officers/political recommendations) and after some time period, they used to get permanent (Now the government has banned colonial era 'bungalow peons' practice, but still many officers possess them, still many officers feel it's their right), Certain percentage of candidates from the railway apprenticeship. Digitalization and online examination have brought some transparency to the recruitment process. Prior to digitalization, there used to be some backdoor entries & cheatings, online examination has put a check to them. As a measure of cost-cutting, government is recruiting only in the safety category and keeping the vacancies to the barest minimum. A clear categorization of posts has to be made which category of posts require candidate from open market (more of a skill & knowledge). And which category of post require management & supervisory skills to handle the manpower. Predominantly managerial & supervisory posts don't require much knowledge only experience is enough.

It is a basic rule in Indian Railways that every person joining the duty has to undergo induction training, where they are imparted with multidimensional knowledge about every aspect of IR. It is mandatory for the technical/non-technical staff to join training courses. The training programs emphasize, learning with a purpose and professional approach. Training programs are designed mainly for the lower-level employees or specifically those who are involved with the field and practical work. Development programs are for the higher-level officials and are more intellect oriented than labour oriented. The UPSC candidates will be trained in their respective centralized training institutes/colleges i.e. IRICEN for Civil, IRIMEE for Mechanical, IRISET for S&T, IREEN for electrical engineers and IRFM for IRAS, IRITM for IRTS, JR-RPFA for RPF, NAIR [Centralised civil service (IRPS), engineering and medical training institute] and other centralized training institutes, where they will be made jack of all trades, having minimum knowledge about all the departments. These institutes have state-of-the-art infrastructure and are the best of their kind in respect of whole personality development. Majority of the candidates will be preparing for Civil services, even after getting posting they will be continuing their preparation until the last attempt (they have the luxury/leverage to continue preparation while on job).

RRB candidates (Group C) also have their own training institutes i.e., ZRTI, ETTC, DTTC, STC's, and P-WAY, TRD, C&W, S&T, Civil Engineering Training centres and also other zonal, divisional training centres for their respective posts. In these institutes, the syllabus sticks only to the nature of duties he/she has to carry out (respective domain knowledge), and are trained to make them masters in their respective field of duty/work. RRC/Group-D candidates generally are given the field training by their respective supervisors or will get to know from their colleagues. The training institutes are following outdated methods of training models/curriculums. Improve the basic infrastructure, to provide structured training programs in an improved learning environment. Many times, the training is routine and there is nothing new and innovative in these training programs. Employees do not learn anything new. Especially for technical staff, the technology, and machines on which the training is provided are outdated, and it does not help to add anything to their knowledge and expertise.

Training programs need innovation and a practical approach. Good training is priceless. The training and motivation of the employees result in the development of confidence and self-respect. Engage quality instructors/professors in the training institutes. These components are the direct outcome of the prevailing work culture in the organization. As a policy decision, the Board has been encouraging for setting up of multidisciplinary training centers where cross-functional competencies could be imparted to railway employees from different functional areas. Not giving relevant and regular training for the employees is also creating 'deadwood' in government departments. Human resource is the most important asset of an organization; great emphasis has to be on improving their skillset. The reason government companies and industries are failing is because they lack innovation & motivation. One of the challenges the railways is facing in India is the need to modernize and adapt to changing economic and technological conditions. In recent years, the Indian Railways has made significant investments in new technologies and infrastructure, such as high-speed trains and advanced signaling systems, in an effort to improve the efficiency and reliability of its services. Effectiveness = Confidence + Competence.

'Half Knowledge is worse than ignorance'- Thomas B. Macaulay

'The Greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, ***it is the illusion of knowledge'****-Stephen Hawking*

'Employees cannot become more productive in every sense of the word unless they are provided with continuous on-the-job training'- Gregory Balestrero.

WORK CULTURE IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

An organization is defined by its culture. This culture directly influences the morale and the pride that people have in their organization. IR is the most preferred mode of transport. It not only integrates the social, economic and cultural foundation of the country but also is the giant facilitator in terms of employment opportunities. Railway staff remain constantly in contact with the public in general. The existing work culture, job profile of employees, leadership styles, incentives, and working conditions influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the railways. An organization is a common platform where individuals work together for earning profits as well as their livelihood. Any organization is made up of two crucial components' viz. employees and workplace environment. An organization cannot build a good team of working professionals without good human resources. The work culture of any organisation can be studied in four different aspects' viz. organisational excellence, empowerment, total quality management and human resource management. Values adopted by administrators are one of the aspects in shaping the work culture.

There are mainly four culture types-

1. Control (hierarchy)
2. Compete (market)
3. Collaborate (clan)
4. Create (adhocracy)

The control culture mainly aims at following the set of rules and regulations systematically, whereas compete for culture aims at creating market competition. Collaborate culture is combining the activities to achieve the results, and creating culture is inventing something new. Indian Railway is a type of hierarchical organisation which has a similarity with the stereotypical large, bureaucratic organisation.

The communication style in the department is typically bureaucratic. The officers will give the instructions/commands and the subordinates are supposed to follow them. The bureaucratic way of functioning is the aspect that leads to the imbalance between the expectations of commuters and the output generated by employees. Due to the shortage of staff and multitasking, the stress level was found which largely affect the existing work culture. Workplace culture is slackness among the majority of staff and no zeal. The hardest part is that few people strive to run the show. The most enjoyable part of the job is that the system is running normally. Lack of professional approach and discipline are other factors for which railways are decried. Rejection of the status quo is the hallmark of true leadership at political, bureaucratic and corporate levels. The Railway management is too much detached from the ground reality. Government organizations are not able to meet the expectations of the public in terms of service provided.

Work culture is based on your interpersonal relationships in the organisation. In Railways, 20% of employees are working like ‘super humans’, fully involved, dedicated. 30% working for ‘some’ satisfaction. 50% working for a salary. A higher proportion of the staff are unproductive and have no zeal to accomplish their responsibilities. But still there are employees who are fully dedicated to the job, only because of them railway is running smoothly. I have seen many employees who have dedicated their entire life to the railways, they respond anytime (24*7) to the call of duty. In every department/office, only a few employees will be doing all the donkey work (You can make the donkey work by beating/ commanding but after some time, if it gets accustomed to those beatings, the interest to work deteriorates and productivity decreases). Some people only work when their officer/supervisor tells them to do the job. They won't be doing any other work not assigned to them. People are not ready to work beyond their job profiles. My supervisor told me during the induction phase that, ‘if you work, you will get more and more work. If you are not working, you will get a salary’.

Technological advancement is the major cause of changing the work environment in railways. No other competing system of transport or technological innovation has enabled a change at the scale that has been brought about by the invention and adoption of the railways like Intermediate block signaling system, electronic interlocking, wireless signaling system, use of modern track machines for track maintenance like track tamping machine, ballast cleaning machine, T-28 machines, real-time train/parcel tracking, Smart Yards, Automatic train protection (ATP) system ‘Kavach’, automatic block signaling system , replacing conventional ICF coaches with LHB coaches, Smart locos, running indigenously developed Vande Bharat trains etc., but not at par with the world trends. Every disruptive technology will have an adverse effect on the working style and policy making. Indian Railways forgot to adopt the contemporary management systems in all their functionality, whether it is operations, finances, or quality. If I am right, since 1990 there have been a lots of management theories professed and practiced by the corporate sector throughout the world successfully. But as I see, Indian Railways missed that note in total. Typical day work is stereotyped and without variation over three or four decades. Management is not dynamic or innovative, and simple monotony. Corporatization doesn’t mean adding a glossy/shiny look to the age-old office buildings. The work culture should reflect the corporate attitude and ambitions rather than the typical government administration. Healthy work culture will reduce the unwillingness and stress among railway employees and cultivate a good image of Indian Railways. There are certain drawbacks of public sector enterprises. The bureaucratic style of functioning lays down hurdles in the path of developing organisational values. This hampers the effective application of core values in the day-to-day administration of railway departments. Factors like effective performance appraisal and feedback, accessibility to superiors, counselling, timely redressal of disputes etc. are equally important in cultivating an effective work culture. Ours is not any typical government organisation, in railways we run the nation.

The working environment constitutes a major part of the work culture. When employees have a clear vision and realization of the objectives of the organisation, clarity in the nature of the job automatically leads to their efficiency. The training and motivation of the employees result in the development of confidence and self-respect. The values are related to various aspects of organisational functioning such as social sensitiveness, innovativeness, creativity, team spirit, employee orientation etc. A strong organisational culture will have a greater influence on the attitude, working behaviour and performance of employees. An organisation is said to have a strong organisational culture if these basic or core values are accepted wholeheartedly and widely shared by employees. The culture of an organisation is formed out of the values and beliefs carried for a long duration by the employees. Work culture changes according to generations at work. Their values, beliefs, and principles change with the changing time.

While the beginning is generally clean, complacency, materialism, ego, and a lack of concern for the work environment, among various factors, tend to influence the organisational culture over time. For those who are desperate for a sense of relativity, my guess is that it has worsened. The monopoly of corporates over market and democracy, the further bureaucratization of labour unions, and the rise of sectarian authoritarianism have run roughshod over a system that was already rotten.

Four pillars of work culture for excellence

1. Punctuality
2. Integrity
3. Professional competence
4. Social Accountability.

However, the superior employees don't treat their subordinates well. Unlike in the Software/corporate industry, there is no culture of treating the subordinates well. The government has given full powers to the officers, and they are misusing those powers. With no common citizen interference, officers will be showing their powers on their subordinates. Misuse their subordinates for personal work, taking subordinates for granted. UPSC officers will still treat you in a bad manner, and this is a humiliation. If Bossism is part and parcel of the job in order to maintain discipline among employees, it has to be up to some extent only (in the name of maintaining discipline, it has turned into slavery especially in open line in some departments). The indifferent and causal attitude of certain officers spoils the work environment. But, not all officers are the same. Some treat their subordinates as a family. Those who want a moderate salary and boring lifestyle then go for the railway. The work culture here is very poor, and you cannot expect help from your superior authority.

The Indian Railways recently went through a very powerful dose of transformation when it attempted organisational reforms cultural, procedural and structural on an unprecedented scale. Driven by the board and piloted by a very able set of officers that constituted the transformation cell, the railways

witnessed phenomenal changes in a year that transcended zonal and divisional boundaries and impacted the ground-level workers. It was indeed an attempt to simplify the complex bureaucracy and deliverance, do away with frills and impart a sense of pride in the entire workforce. I have always been surprised by the mistrust that many organisations nurture. The best organisations are, however, those that maintain a perfect balance between authority and accountability, yet it is so very rare to find them.

While there needs to be pressure to perform, we also need to create an environment in which people are both comfortable and fearless, and do not have any qualms about standing up or doing what is right. People under constant stress behave differently as compared to people who are emotionally well-balanced. The emotional and physical conditions of a person get disturbed when the pressure starts surmounting. It results in showing signs of uneasiness through work performance and health. It is the process of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy resulting from prolonged exposure to stress. It's not only the immediate superior, but the higher-level management should take an active part in understanding this feeling of employees. A fearful employee devoid of courage can never be an asset. In order to do this, we must encourage the top management to freely mingle at all levels of work. We also need to encourage small successes and appreciate our employees whenever they succeed, even if it is a routine activity done well. What needs to percolate is the thought that good work needs to be actively and continuously encouraged. We have seen that regular felicitation of even the lowest rung railway employees in the chairman's chamber, for their exemplary work while on duty, has made an impact. Reforming the processes related to decision-making is paramount. Simplification of processes and having absolute trust in people hold the key.

In addition, there is often a great deal of pressure on railway workers to meet deadlines and keep the trains running on time. Despite these challenges, the railway work culture in India is one that is deeply respected and valued. Railway workers are often seen as being among the most dedicated and hardworking members of the workforce, and they play a vital role in keeping the country moving. One of the defining features of the railway work culture in India is the strong sense of community and camaraderie that exists among employees. Many railway workers spend long periods of time working away from home, and this can create a strong bond among colleagues. Railway workers often work in close-knit teams, and there is a strong emphasis on teamwork and cooperation.

The railway work culture in India is characterized by a strong emphasis on safety, efficiency, and customer service. With over 64,000 kilometers of track and more than 7,500 stations, the Indian railway system is one of the largest and most complex in the world, and it plays a crucial role in the country's transportation network. One of the key features of the railway work culture is the focus on safety. Railways are a potentially dangerous working environment, and employees are trained to follow strict safety procedures and protocols to ensure the safety of both themselves and their passengers. This includes

following rules for track maintenance, operating trains, and handling hazardous materials, as well as responding to emergencies and accidents. Efficiency is also a key priority in the railway work culture. With millions of passengers traveling on trains every day, it is important that the railway system runs smoothly and efficiently in order to meet the needs of travelers. This includes maintaining and repairing trains and tracks, managing scheduling and timetables, and ensuring that trains arrive and depart on time. Customer service is another important aspect of the railway work culture. Employees are expected to be courteous and helpful to passengers, and to do their best to ensure that travelers have a positive experience while using the railway system. This includes answering questions, assisting with luggage, and addressing any issues or concerns that may arise during travel. Overall, the railway work culture in India is built around a commitment to safety, efficiency, and customer service. By following these principles, railway employees help to ensure that the Indian railway system is one of the safest and most reliable in the world.

The presence of British culture in Indian Railways can be attributed to the colonial legacy of British rule in India, which lasted for nearly two centuries. During the colonial period, the British built the railway system in India primarily to serve their economic interests, such as transporting goods and raw materials across the country. They also used the railways to consolidate their control over the vast Indian subcontinent and to facilitate the movement of their troops. As part of their colonial project, the British brought with them their cultural practices and values, which had a profound impact on Indian society, including Indian Railways. This included the introduction of British-style architecture, engineering, and management practices in the construction and operation of railways.

The British also introduced various social and cultural practices, such as the rigid hierarchical system of management and the strict adherence to rules and regulations, which continue to influence the functioning of Indian Railways to this day. Despite India gaining independence, the British cultural influence on Indian Railways has persisted due to the continuation of many of these practices and traditions. Additionally, the railway system has become an integral part of Indian society and culture, and its history and legacy are an essential aspect of the country's heritage. Still there are many colonial British traditions which are being followed in Indian Railways.

The railway work culture is also shaped by a strong emphasis on safety and efficiency. With millions of passengers relying on the railways every day, it is critical that employees are vigilant in their duties and work to maintain the highest possible standards of safety and reliability. Overall, the railway work culture in India is characterized by a strong sense of community, a commitment to safety and efficiency, and a focus on continuous improvement and modernization.

'Culture is what motivates and retains talented employees'- Betty Thompson

*'**In a bureaucratic system, useless work drives out useful work**'- Milton Friedman*

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF INDIAN RAILWAYS

(Strictly Following British Colonial legacy)

Indian Railway functions on versatile layers. The hierarchy is tall and there are many decision-makers at every level. The Railway Ministry and the Railway Board are the apex bodies deciding the strategies and policies of Indian Railways. Each category of the hierarchy can act as an effective leader for smooth and effective administration. The right approach and direction by the higher authorities can act as ideals for the subordinates. Higher officials can set an example for the lower-level officials, and so on. Finally, the ultimate goal of any leader in the hierarchy should be to achieve the vision and mission of the organisation. Organisations are human associations in which two or more people seek to achieve a common goal or set of goals. It consists of people working together through interrelationships and interactions. In an organisation, different authority levels and job profiles are defined to achieve specialization through the division of labour. The work culture of any organisation is related mainly to the organisational hierarchy and the authority structure of administration. **The imbalance between authority and responsibility leads to less productivity and inefficiency of the railway staff.**

Any organisation works as a basic social system. Same as a society, it has its own rules and regulations. The formation of a strong team for the success of the organisation starts from identifying and selecting the right person for the right job and continues with maintaining employee loyalty towards the organisation. During this whole process, the human resource manager has to take care of the employees as one family and develop a sense of commitment among them towards achieving the common goal of the organisation. Also, the career development of an employee should not be ignored. Employees in the organisation should get equal opportunities to develop themselves simultaneously. You will need to grow a thicker skin to work in railways as the work culture is as such. The administration is totally biased towards UPSC IRSE officers, placing them in key positions, and they are totally ignorant about others.

Obviously, railways being the behemoth organisation for its smooth and uniform functioning Railway has its own Model Schedule of Powers (SOP), clearly mentioning the powers of each and every officers and set of rules and regulations to be followed in order to maintain uniformity in working. Usually government organizations follow a standard operating procedure (SOPs), step by step instructions compiled by an organization to help workers carry out routine operations. SOPs aim to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance, reducing miscommunication and failure to comply with industry regulations. Officers follow this processes religiously, may be at extreme cost. Such people never bother about the goal, actually they don’t know the goal of governance. They have encroached the system and system fails to deliver its best to the society. Nobody, not even a strong leader like Narendra Modi, is

able to make the Indian bureaucracy reform its ways — reduce the number of needless steps in their perfect SOPs, and make people's lives easier. The bureaucracy seems to exist to make people's lives tougher, because each cog in the wheel is only trying to be faithful to its own desk. Nobody looks at the larger picture and there is little accountability."

Distinction between Centralisation and Decentralisation:

Decentralization is the tendency to disperse decision-making power in an organized structure. It is a fundamental aspect of delegation; to the extent that authority is not delegated, it is centralized. These are referred to the location of decision-making authority in an organisation. Centralization and Decentralization are the tendencies of decision-making authority. Centralization implies the concentration of authority at the top level of the organisation while decentralization means the dispersal of authority throughout the organisation. According to Henri Fayol, "Everything that goes to increase the importance of the subordinate's role is decentralization; everything that goes to reduce it is centralisation". Centralisation and Decentralisation describe the manner in which decision-making authority is delegated. Centralization reserves the decision--making power at top level; while decentralisation disperses the decision-making. Centralisation and decentralization are the opposite ends of the organisation. On the one hand, centralisation produces uniformity of policy and action, utilizes the skills of centralised and specialized staff, and enables closer control over operating units. On the other hand, decentralisation tends to affect faster decision-making and action on the spot without consulting higher levels. Decentralisation has the effect of motivating the subordinates since they get a greater role in decision--making process. However, there can neither be absolute centralisation nor decentralization is an organisation. These are two extreme points in matters of distributing authority in the organisation structure, and in between these points, there may be a continuum of authority distribution.

TOP DOWN MANAGEMENT
VS
BOTTOM UP MANAGEMENT
Sets clear goals and expectations
Weak or dictatorial leader
Motivates everyone by giving them a voice
Too many voices can slow progress

(https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/management/centralisation-and-decentralisation/99805)

William H. Newman has divided authority to plan down into four alternative arrangements:

(i) Centralized Administration,

(ii) Limited Decentralization,

(iii) Delegated Authority, and

(iv) Bottom- up- Administration.

A balance has to be struck between these to increase the effectiveness of an organisational structure and to improve the overall functioning. Rationalization has to be done at Zonal/ Divisional levels also.

Hierarchy in Indian Railways

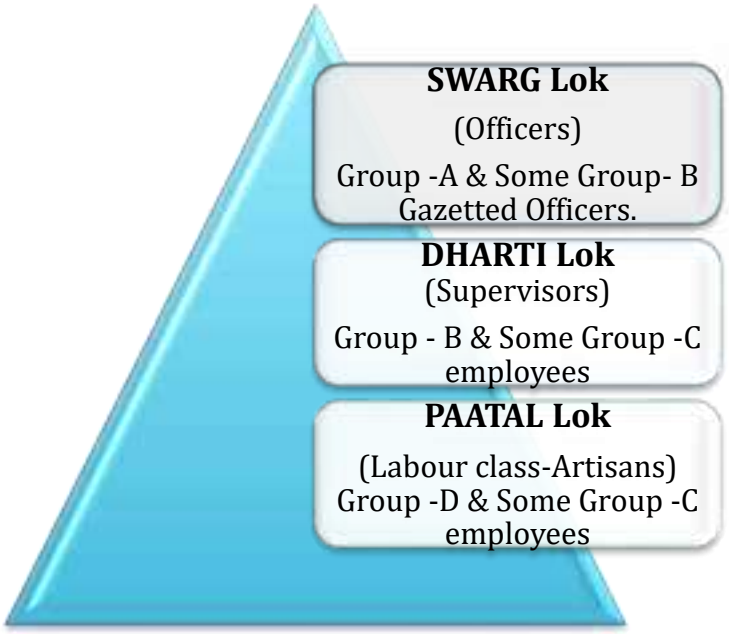
- **Group A**
  - HAG+
  - HAG
  - SAG
  - Selection Grade (SG)
  - JAG
  - Sr. Scale

  HAG+, HAG, SAG, Selection Grade (SG) -Professionals

  JAG, Sr. Scale -Highly skilled
- **Group B** (Various levels)- Skilled
- **Group C** (Various levels)- Semi skilled
- **Group D** (Various levels)- Unskilled

Each department consists of four levels of employees, viz. Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D. In the divisional set up all the branches are headed by the Executive branch officers (BO). All branches are controlled by PHODs in headquarter and DRM in the division. Class A officers are the in charge of the department which consists of Senior Divisional Officers and two divisional Officers. Class B is the Assistant Officers helping the Divisional Officers in administration. Class C consists of Chief Office Superintendents and Office Superintendents, supervisors and also the operational and clerical staff. Class D consists of the helping staff, which is the lowest category in the hierarchy. Many of the group C and

group D employees have graduate and postgraduate degrees. This shows the employment conditions in the country. People are ready to work in the group D category, which is the lowest category in the organisational hierarchy, in spite of their higher education.

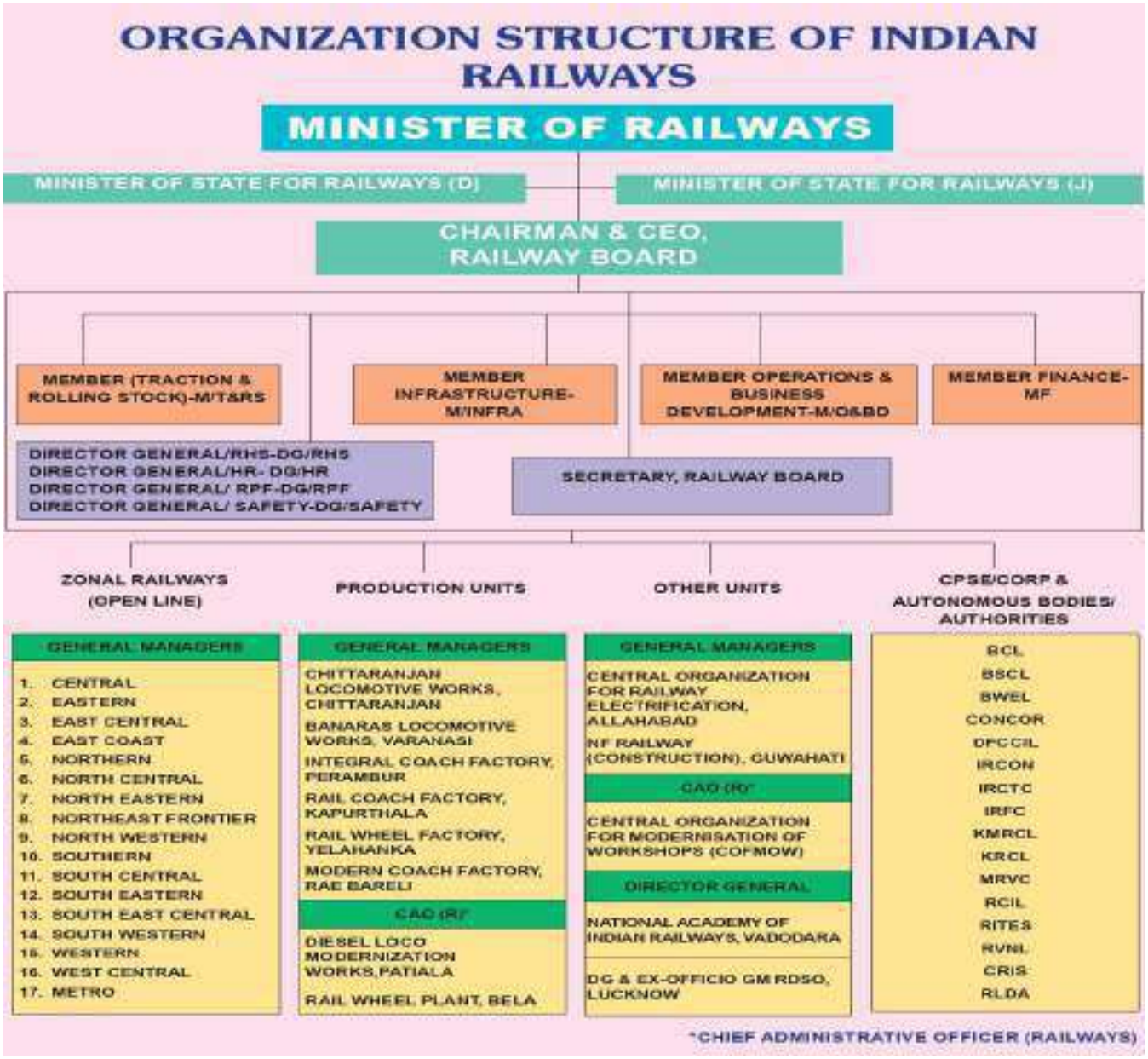


Balance in Administration,

#Fear — that is enough to ensure that the work is done & integrity is maintained.
#Freedom — that is enough to point out mistakes, upward communication flow and take fast field decisions.
Too much fear cripples, too much freedom creates tumult.

Metaphorically, India's bureaucratic hierarchy – divided into four groups – mirrors the toxic chaturvarna vyavastha, or the caste system, to which admission is determined by one's performance in the annual civil service and other entrance examinations. And much like the accident of birth that determines one's station in the chaturvarna vyavastha, entry into one of these aforesaid categories too determines the future course of one's career, circumscribing mobility across the broad of service groupings. So many levels of hierarchy make the person at the bottom of the pyramid inferior/ belittle & the person at the top anarchic. The treatment given to group D employees by the officers is sometimes inferior, demoralizing and insulting. It creates a sense of rage and annoyance in their mind. This results directly in underperformance at work. The chain of command i.e., the organisational hierarchy has a strong influence on the functioning of people. The more the standardization, the more rigid are rules and regulations. Railway being the government entity, it follows a bureaucratic functioning style, in a bureaucratic form of governance unnecessary work overrules necessary work. Indian Railways is a huge organisation and hence there are different designations and authorities of the staff. There is a need to change the organisational hierarchy. Also, decentralization of the decision-making authority is quite essential. This organizational

structure of Depot level, Divisional level/Production units, Zonal level, Board level is not working fine as far as my knowledge goes. The administration has to be decentralized to the depot level by bringing all the departments under one umbrella. The organizations doing similar nature of works has to be unified for better utilization of manpower and resources there by strengthening the system



Recent organizational restructuring at the apex level, to make the railway board structure leaner (right-sized). The Railway Board will now consist of five members – Chairman, who will act as a CEO, along with four members responsible for infrastructure, operations and business development, rolling stock and finance. The most confusing thing about railways is their long list of designations. The hierarchy of the department is tall. The subordinate staff has to report to the Office Superintendent. They are controlled by the Chief Office Superintendent, who has to report to the Section Officer. The Section Officer reports to the Senior Section Officer. The Assistant Officers work on the top of Senior Section Officers, and he

has to report to Divisional Officer 1 and Divisional Officer 2 who in turn report to the Senior Divisional Manager. After the supervisory/assistant scale, the jobs become more administrative rather than managerial. It is a form of 'tall' organisation in terms of levels of authority, and each level has numerous designations. The effectiveness of a decision diminishes as it reaches the lowest authority. The organisational restructuring should be supported by internal restructuring as well. The authority levels should be merged together to become more effective. Decentralization of authority should be practised. Many people don't know the administrative structure of the government and how it functions. More often I see people blaming Govt. / Politicians very often.

Organisations are run through people. An organisation is nothing without its resources. If employees are removed from the organisation, there is nothing but a pile of raw material, Machines, and physical commodities. The organisation consists of a combination of different resources, among which human resources are superior. Only human resources have the capacity to utilize the remaining resources as per the requirement. Intellect and emotion are two important characteristics of human resources which make them stand apart from other resources. Management is the process of efficiently getting work activities completed with and through other people. Any institute/organisation consists of **unlimited goals and limited resources**. The limited resources should be allocated properly for the completion of various activities. Simply, management is the act of allocating scarce resources to achieve goals and getting required activities completed with and through other people. The basic purpose of the establishment of any organisation is reflected through its vision and mission. The policies and strategies are directed towards the achievement of the mission of the organisation. The rules and regulations support the policies and procedures in the accomplishment of its goal. Since every organisation is made up of people, acquiring their services, developing their skills, motivating them to high levels of performance and ensuring that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organisation are essential to achieve organizational objectives. The willing cooperation of employees is necessary to achieve the organisational objectives. Railways follow bureaucratic leadership patterns. They follow the rules and regulations laid down by the centralized authority. Leadership styles are of different types like autocratic, democratic, situational, charismatic and transformational. I think we are close to an autocratic form of leadership 'I am the Boss and everyone should follow my orders'. In railways your boss is always right and they only tolerate 'yes boss' type of subordinates. The head weight they develop over the years of being a **Group-A officer** is dangerously high and scary.

'All history has been a history of class struggles between dominated classes at various stages of social development'- Friedich Engels.

'Power is dangerous. It corrupts the best and attracts the worst. Power is only given to those who are prepared to lower themselves to pick it up'- Ragnar Lothbrok

ROLE OF RAILWAY BOARD

Administration of railways is undertaken at two levels. At the higher-level authorities, i.e., Ministry of Railways and Railway Boards and the other are at lower-level authorities, i.e., Zonal and Divisional offices. Railway Board at the apex level. As a department, the Railway Board exercises full powers of the Government of India, including control of the railway budget and finances. It is responsible not only for the control and coordination of maintenance and operation of the railways but also for planning the development of the system and future construction, infrastructure, operations and business development, rolling stock, and finance. The railway board synchronizes the scarce resources with the help of human resources in Indian Railways.

1st Estate

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAILWAY BOARD

2nd Estate

POLICY MAKERS

GM, PHOD, CAO, DRM, DG's

3rd Estate

POLICY IMPLEMENTERS

SAG, Selc. Grade, JAG, Sr. Scale Officers

GROUP-B OFFICERS- A Buffer between Officers and Subordinates.

GROUP-C & GROUP-D EMPLOYEES

Working Class - Artisans & Casual Labour

However, the highest authority is vested in the Railway Board at New Delhi and by the time the decision reaches the divisional level, it loses its force and effectiveness. The significance of the lower-level employees and their motivation is lost as they get a rare opportunity to reach the top level. Any administration runs by policies and strategic decisions taken by its management. Indian Railways is not an exception to it. The three-tier functioning system of railways decides the work environment in the organisation. The involvement of a huge number of human resources in decision-making makes the handling of problems difficult. Railway Ministry and Railway Board are the higher authorities for making all the crucial decisions related to railways. The Railway board has an impression of working as a British Crown. In this top down flow algorithm, the policy letter from the board are getting misinterpreted at the lower levels or getting ignored.

Centralized control is necessary to check the uniformity in the railway functioning. The requirement of effective leadership at every level is different. The Railway Ministry and Railway Board can be effective leaders in terms of policy and strategy decisions. Planning is equally important as implementation is. Efforts should be increased by the zonal, divisional and departmental level managers for the implementation aspects. Every official can act as an effective leader. The departmental officer should focus on the mission of the railways and accordingly direct his subordinates. The role of subordinates is the loyal implementation of the orders and duties. They will be encouraged to work hard only on their superiors' motivation. There are two ways by which the person leads in his work area. One way is by the imposition of the decisions on his subordinates, and the other is by discussion with them. The hierarchal system should not be like, only the bottom layer faces all the heat and the top layer just enjoys the fire.

#Break-the-Hierarchy.

'Power is neither good nor evil, but its user makes it so'- Erin Hunter

ROLE/DUTIES OF AN INDIAN RAILWAY OFFICER

The officer is the in-charge of the department and is responsible for the performance of his subordinates. His team includes deputy officers, supervisors, operating staff and clerical staff. The officers create a desirable work culture in the departments. Their style of leadership influences the work culture of their departments. Head of the departments of the respective departments take decisions related to matters other than personnel. More emphasis is on bureaucratic administration than the progress of the institution. They are discharging their duties on behalf of the president of India. The duty of the officer is to make the people work and get things done. Officers are the brain of the organization. They are paid for their intelligence, they are the ones who has to plan for the smooth running of the department, subordinates are the aiding/helping arms, and it is the officer responsibility to make better/best use of them. Managers who fail to read situations properly and act accordingly, develop poor working relationships, are too authoritarian and have a conflict with upper management.

The divisional officers of engineering, mechanical, electrical, signal and telecommunication, accounts, personnel, operating, commercial, security and safety branches report to the respective Divisional Manager and are in charge of operation and maintenance of assets. The Senior Divisional Officer of each department is accountable for the management of the whole department. He is responsible for the smooth functioning of the work allocated to his department. The job profile of each employee is fixed, and appropriate authority is also allotted to him. IES officers get the chance to apply Engineering, Management and Administrative skills.

Officers are the Rajas and Maharajas of IR (Particularly IRSE civil engineers in technical branches and IRTS in Non-technical branches), an **empire building** is happening (network building is good). They are used to acting as a King, successors of the '**heaven born**' colonial Indian Civil Service. The power goes to their head as if they own everything. For this, we can't blame the individual officers, the system as a whole that made it possible has to be blamed. Officer Cadre is the happiest sitting in their AC cabins, and Group D employees like the gang men are the unhappiest of them all. Open line and running staff are the ones who are toiling day and night in all weather conditions for smooth running of trains. We are the ones who shed our sweat & blood and take the risk to do the job in the field, and they enjoy AC rooms. I mean, who likes to work their asses out in the hot sun without getting a deserved pay every day. Without any encouraging promotion policy. With advanced technology, Officers' job has become even simpler, forwarding the messages/passing orders form officers groups to employee groups.

IRSE/IRSEE/IRSE/IRSME Officers join as AEN/AEE/ASTE/AME, who is the in charge of his section with about 1700-1800 persons working under him and 2-4 persons working in his bungalow. A big

bungalow with plenty of manpower to maintain it. Relatively fast promotions. Within 6 years, you become Sr.DEN/Sr.DEE/Sr.DSTE/Sr.DME equivalent to Superintending engineer. In Railways, there is no shortage of funds. Unimaginable extra income. As in every engineering department, there is an established commission system set up. A certain percentage of the bill passed is kept for every officer, you don't have to ask for it. Almost all DEN/DEE/DSTE/DME's and SrDEN/Sr.DEE/Sr.DSTE/Sr.DME earn around 2-3 lakhs per month of extra income (This varies from department to department). They enjoy all other facilities of government service.

- **Job content**- Mostly managerial. However, in the initial 4-5 years officers are supposed to be working close to the technical aspects of railways (to get familiarization with the working of railways field units) to ensure the rules and regulations are being followed.
- **Salary**- Govt. of India has a fixed pay band for all Group A officers of a particular grade. So, whether IAS or IES officer, the salary is the same (apart from the allowances).
- **Political interference**- Almost none. Local political leaders get involved in PPP/EPC projects. Without their support, railways can't get the work done.
- **Feudalism**- Huge. However, it varies slightly from zone to zone. Humongous bungalows, domestic help, khalasis etc are almost everywhere. The respect that you receive inside railways will make you get addicted to it!
- **Vertical hierarchy** — Very rigid tall hierarchy. **In most cases, you will find yourself at the mercy of your boss.** (this has to be addressed immediately).
- **Bodyguard/ Gunners** — Why do you need them? Helper/Khalasi recruited through CG appointment or through largess scheme/Group-D exam will serve the purpose. No RPF bodyguards for you unless you are DRM/GM.

The indifferent and casual attitude of certain officers spoils the work environment. The IES officers are definitely the technical Cream of the nation, no doubt in that, but after entering into the system, where their technical expertise is of limited use and the positions they hold, is more of an administrative nature (service teaches them more management skills). Use that 'cream' for the noble cause, place them in universities (even in this competitive world still universities are considering a piece of degree as eligibility criteria for recruiting assistant professors, professors, 'like uncle judges in judiciary; in universities there are uncle- professors', they are using the loop holes of 'independent bodies' to recruit as their wish). As All India Judicial Service (AIJS) is under proposal, also bring back the Indian Education Service (IES).

With modern methods like Social Media Governance, officers have to be answerable to the common public as well. But that can also be done by nominating certain social media experts to do their work. This has become a boon to the officers and bane for the working-class employees, daily they have to update the work status on chat groups, officers/supervisors will be monitoring the work (e-governance doesn't mean

WhatsApp/social media governance). With digitalization, the centralization of control of power & authority is even more. They can run the show from their AC cabins, this makes them authoritarian & sluggish. The CPRO team is painting a rosy picture of railways to the world, hiding the flaws in railway administration.

There are two ways of making your subordinates work, by being nice to them and by being authoritarian, Railway officers chose the latter. Authoritarian officers don't listen to the ground constraints & practicalities (A matter of fact they don't know the ground reality; they are far detached from the ground level). It is their way of '**instilling fear**' by **projecting their supremacy/power and authority**. It is a form of **psychological manipulation** (Britishers used to follow this method to rule over us, by inculcating insecure/inferior feeling among Indians). They do it to keep the fear alive, they do it with an intention to control subordinates. Indian railway officers/supervisors will be like, if you can't get their loyalty, then grab their obedience. The attitude, behaviour, and performance of employees form the work environment of the department. Motivated employees are the assets of the department, as achieving departmental goals become easier. They also help to keep the morale high for other employees. It becomes practically impossible to contact each individual and help him out in his work. The officers try to give opportunities to the subordinates to understand and explore their talents. An employee is not going to be efficient without a superior's control. There should be honest attempts made by the officers for employee counselling at the departmental level. Vesting all the power in one hand and teaching some ethics and believing him to be saint/genuine is foolish. The thought process should be "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' but in railways, we can see only 'officer's Vikas'. Demigod officers whose Luggage has to be carried by a- helpers/technicians, a free service wherever they travel (extended service even for their family members also). Officer's rest houses (ORH) everywhere. A bungalow peon/helper (orderly system) accompany the officers to do menial chores. Princely treatment.

Officers gets accustomed to this treatment. Get these officers to come down from their high horses and work in the field, stop giving them so many perks and powers. The culture of Babu's in the administration is characterized by a strong emphasis on hierarchy, bureaucracy and protocol. It is disgusting/shameful in Railways that subordinate employee cannot even enter officer's chambers freely, you can imagine the kind of bureaucratic system we are living in. On a trivial note most of the labour/working class employees are living in a vicious cycle of slavery (most of them are unaware of this, they think it is also their duty to serve their superior officers, blindly following their orders). I think we are suffering from '**Officer pleasing syndrome'**. I think the colonial legacy mindset is ruining our institutions. The swadeshi raj takes over from the angrezi raj.. only difference being white skinned Babu's replaced with brown skinned ones.

'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power'- Abraham Lincoln.

ROLE/DUTIES OF SUBORDINATE STAFF

The working class employees, the real foot soldiers of Indian railways. The Indian Railway Establishment Manual provides the rules and regulations for each category of staff separately. Class C and Class D staff are clearly distinguished in it. They are also called Non-gazetted staff. Their percentage in the total number of employees is much higher than the gazette staff, i.e., Officers and Assistant Officers. Class C staff is of both types, i.e., clerical and operating. Their designations differ according to different departments. Class D staff is a supporting staff. The vast difference between the higher-level management and the lower-level staff in the department has aroused. The work of the lower class is heavy and physically tiring. Still, they are the lowest-paid categories. This discrimination creates a gap between the two levels in the department. Also, it affects the behaviour of the supportive staff to a large extent. The practical level difficulties are handled by them in a better manner, sometimes even better than the officers. **The experience of technical staff matters a lot to run the departmental activities effectively.** The real asset of an officer is his supervisors and they are the most mentally stressed among all the employees. They are the in-charge of the given section and they have to maintain the section 24/7. They have to respond immediately in case of any breakdowns/derailments, a very responsible job. Without adequate number of motivated skilled staff under him, maintaining the entire section 24*7 becomes very difficult. Staff motivation may come from promotions, salary, place of posting, work culture/environment, service motive etc.

Subordinates are not happy with the existing work culture and work-related values. The major unhappiness is with discrimination and favouritism by the seniors. The corruption at a higher level bothers them. The selfish attitude of officers does not encourage the subordinates to work wholeheartedly towards organisational goals. The infrastructure and basic facilities should be sufficient. The work culture needs a change that can be brought by transformational leadership according to the opinion of subordinate staff. Many of the group C and group D employees have graduate and postgraduate degrees. This shows the employment conditions in the country. People are ready to work in the group D category, which is the lowest category in the organisational hierarchy, in spite of their higher education. The responsibilities and duties of subordinates are fixed and are stereotyped. There is no enthusiasm for experimentation with the working style as it is also fixed for years together. The only way of influencing staff is through motivation to earn promotions at early stages. Those greasy hands also dream to hold the green pen.

The treatment given to group D employees by the officers is sometimes inferior and insulting. It creates a sense of rage and annoyance in their mind. The officers are highly paid, but the subordinate staff is underpaid. Physical and technical work is given less importance than intellectual work. The pay scales

of railways are discriminatory. Still, many inhuman practices are continuing in railways like bungalow peon, orderly staff, trolley pushers, officers/supervisors will be sitting comfortably on the trolley, pushers will be pushing the trolley whatever may be the gradient (now we have motor/battery trolleys). All the less educated men will be posted as helpers to the officers, as they will be working as muscle men protecting our insecure officers. Instead of giving them posting according to their capabilities, they will be used to do menial jobs as directed by officers. Because they will be doing anything as said by the officers without even thinking. We are here in the railways just to feed our families, to make a livelihood, not to make riches (unlike officers who take oaths to service to the people). Create a healthy ecosystem. Maintain cordial relations between the employer and employees. Believe in transparency and technology.

Supervisors are slaves in railways. Sandwiched in between officers and the workers. The biggest flaw in railway working is that from top to bottom whenever any issue arises only the bottom of the pyramid has to take the burden/blame. Unnecessary work overrules the necessary work in railways. Colonial hangover still continues. In IR, Working/Labour class employees tend to underestimate their positions while **bureaucrats overdo their position and derive undue advantages from it**. I have a small message for the officers, you are not running the government, you are just running a train, please don't over estimate your position as of a district Magistrate (DM) or of an SP. Democratic exercise of authority is a rarity it seems, be it any field. (We live in a 3rd rated judicial and police system where rule by law triumphs rather than rule by law. They provide justice to only money and power, not for the poor). Our lack of knowledge of basic rights is very well exploited and they behave like white colonial masters instead of serving the public. Officers supremacy in railways has to be questioned, do they deserve this princely/Royal treatment?

'Bureaucracy defends the status quo long past the time when the quo has lost its status'- Laurence J.Peter

'To make real connections you need to see the others as PEOPLE instead of as subordinates, followers, or hired gun s'-Doug Conant.

SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP

The hierarchy in the departments is fixed. The subordinates have to report to their immediate superiors. There are many layers through which the work reports or orders pass. The major drawback in this type of organisation is the Tall Hierarchy. The Chief Superintendent plays a major role in keeping the connection of all employees in each department. Section officer works as a link between higher management and lower-level employees. The relationship at each level is mixed. Sometimes subordinates are utilized for even the household activities of the officers. The gap between the officer class and the working class is large, which furthers the spirit of oneness. The primary duty of all the railway employees is to make the passenger/freight reach the destination. Without proper coordination, how can it be possible?

There are disagreements on one issue between two in charge officers/supervisors. There are a lot of internal conflicts among subordinates about work distribution, transfer of work from one section to another and from one person to another. Sometimes, subordinates have to pay a heavy price for the ego clashes between the officers. This situation happens because of a lot of designations in the authority hierarchy. There is a lot of communication gaps between two layers of hierarchy and the message does not reach clearly to the next level. The section officer of each department should take the responsibility to divide the work among the superintendents, and they should get it done through the employees under their span of control. This division of work and clarity of responsibility helps to avoid confusions. The work environment remains happy and healthy. The controlling authorities should use their supervisory powers skilfully and make people head towards the target. Favouritism was repetitively mentioned by the employees. This practice of favouring some selected employees spoils the environment in the department and sincere employees get demoralized. Values like impartiality and transparency in work should be strictly followed by the officers, and they should set an example for their subordinates as well. **Less talent and big ego is very dangerous combination**, a nightmare for subordinates.

People under constant stress behave differently as compared to people who are emotionally well-balanced. The emotional and physical conditions of a person get disturbed when the pressure starts surmounting. It results in showing signs of uneasiness through work performance and health. It is the process of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy resulting from prolonged exposure to stress. It’s not only the immediate superior, but the higher-level management should take an active part in understanding this feeling of employees. The social and emotional support given to a person can help him cope with stress effectively. Organisational strategies to cope with the stress can be job redesigning, communication network, supportive supervision, participative decision-making, better organisational

culture and teamwork. An employee works mainly for his family and the ultimate intention is to spend some quality time with his family members and take care of them. The relationship between an employee and employer must be like a 'Fish and Water' but not like a fish and fisherman. Maintain cordial relations between the officer and the subordinate. You can't run the system for long, by instilling fear of memos and charge sheets. I have seen many employees who got fed-up with the railway working culture, when they get SF-11 & SF-5. Officers are simply giving SF-11 to the subordinates to project their supremacy without even bothering about its effect on morale of the employee, which in turn affects the railway working.

Communication with subordinates

Communication in any organisation has to be effective. The communication gap usually leads to misunderstandings by the employees. Also, the idea of carrying out the particular work in a specific manner cannot be conveyed effectively if there is a lack of proper communication. Railway departments are the ideal examples of bureaucratic functioning. The communication between the officers and the subordinate staff is mainly restricted to work. The number of designations corresponds to the number of employees. There is more downward communication from the officials to the subordinates in terms of instructions and orders. Upward communication is only in terms of reporting. Horizontal communication is quite common in railway departments. Subordinates are comfortable with each other rather than approaching their superiors. The major obstacle in case of organisational hierarchy of the railway department is 'tall organisation' (Class divide is also a barrier for coordination/communication among employees). Large number of designations at each level leads to delay in work and also effective decision-making. Communication and leadership can be effective only when the hierarchy is short. Barriers to communication develop in case of tall hierarchy. The departmental authorities will be able to communicate impressively with their subordinates when they are easily accessible. The bureaucratic functioning creates lots of limitations on communication. The officers can be effective leaders when they have direct communication with their subordinates. The communication gap between the superior and subordinates is also narrowed through such functions. The communication between the senior departmental officers and the running staff should be constructive.

The Role of Communication in Management

The role of management is to accomplish the goals of an organization. To do this, managers create a plan that defines what needs to be done, when it will be done, and how it will be done. To implement the plan, managers must convey this information to everyone in the organization. That is, they must communicate the plan to members of the organization. However, managers need to do much more than just inform people what they need to do to support the plan. They also must motivate people to support the

plan, build commitment to the organization, establish rapport and collaboration, and keep everyone informed of events and actions that affect the organization. Good communication not only informs but also helps to create a culture that makes people feel like they belong to and want to support the organization. Following are some of the benefits of effective communication.

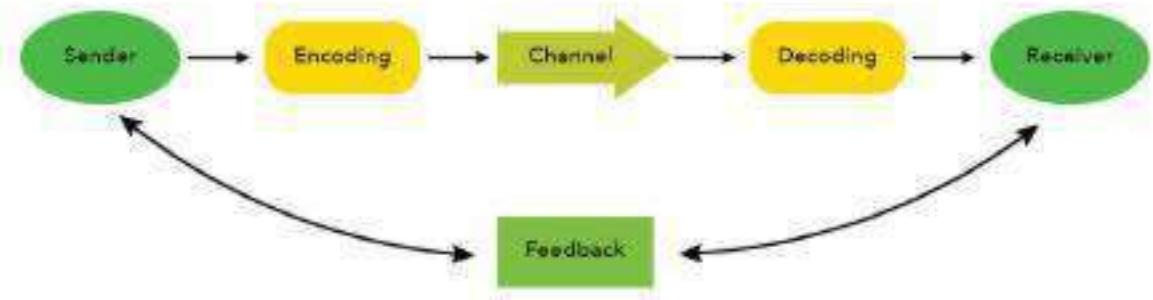
- **Provides clarity.** Confusion, uncertainty, and ambiguity make people uncomfortable and uncooperative. Making roles, responsibilities, and relationships clear gives everyone the information they need to do their jobs and to understand their contributions to the organization. Effective communication reduces the cost associated with conflicts, misunderstandings, and mistakes.
- **Builds Relationships.** A culture that promotes open communication reduces tension between hierarchical levels of employees, both professionally and socially. In a trusting and collaborative culture, people are more likely to seek help with problems and to suggest solutions and improvements. Effective communication creates a collegial culture that fosters teamwork and encourages cooperation.
- **Creates commitment.** Effective communication involves not only sending information but also receiving it. By listening to employees' concerns, allowing them to have input on their work and their workplace, and giving consideration to their suggestions, managers can make everyone in the organization feel like they are valued contributors. When employees feel like they are valued in the organization, they will likely be more engaged and motivated. Effective communication creates support and commitment.
- **Defines expectations.** When people are uncertain about what is expected of them and how they will be evaluated, they can't do their jobs well. Performance reviews are difficult because the employee does not know the performance standards they are expected to meet. And if corrective measures are necessary, the employee may be resentful if he can't see how his behaviors reduced his effectiveness. When expectations and standards are clear, employees know what they need to do to get a positive review and the benefits that come with it.

These are just a few of the many benefits that come from effective communications. Managers can only reach organizational goals when the people in the organization are committed to the goals. People perform much better when they are informed and involved.

The Communication-Process Model

The communication process may seem simple: one person sends a message and others receive it. The process becomes more complex, however, because the information in the message must be sent and received accurately. The communication-process model describes how the *information* is sent and received.

The following diagram shows this model.



https://inside.6q.io/employee-mental-health-managers-concern/

The Importance of Effective Communication

Organizations cannot exist without communication. If there is no communication

- Employees cannot know what their co-workers are doing.
- Management cannot receive information inputs.
- Supervisors and team leaders cannot give instructions.
- Coordination of work is impossible (organization will collapse for lack of communication)
- Cooperation also become impossible (Because people cannot communicate their needs and feelings to others).

When communication is effective it will tend to encourage better performance and job satisfaction (People understand their jobs better and feel more involved in them). The orders flows from the top to bottom but when it comes to punishing the staff it goes from bottom to top. The responsibilities has to increase gradually, but in railways even a JE is made an in-charge of the depot. The responsivity and power has to increase with the age. Open communication is generally better than restricted communication. In effect if employees know the problems the problems an organization is facing and hear what managers are trying to do, they will usually respond favorably. **Giving instructions/commands is so easy** but converting that into reality is the toughest task which is done by the team, team work is missing in railways.

The twenty-first century has witnessed a transformation of the organization, opportunities, and terms of work. Downsizing, restructuring, and outsourcing are the forces altering employment relationships throughout the work force. Those who tend to see the future in a positive light view the evolving role between employer and employee as empowering for the individual. Railway management is too much detached from the ground reality. Management has to look forward to cherish the vision of an organization. Officer has to 'Be a LEADER not a BOSS'. Commanding is easy but leading the team is difficult.

'90% of all management problems are caused by miscommunication'-Dale Carnegie

'Miscommunication leads to complication'- Lauryn Hill

*'In order for collaboration to take place, managers **must give up their silos and their perceptions of power**'- Jane Ripley.*

ROLE OF LABOUR/ TRADE UNIONS

Industrial relations and unionism are important concepts for government entities. Trade unions play an active role in fighting for the rights of employees in such bureaucratic organisations. Representation of employees' problems and grievances in front of management is the main function of these unions. The recognized unions are said to be working for the welfare of employees. Their role should be more constructive and the execution of work should be clearly seen. Employees do not have a very positive image of unions in their minds. They remain neutral when it comes to the membership in the unions. The relations between union members and management should not be stressful. The overall working of unions should be more effective and impressive. It will create trust and faith in the minds of employees as well as management. The political interference in unions should be completely removed. Union leaders are not fighting for the right cause; they have their own priorities. Unions should give strength to the employees standing by their side, employees look at you as a strong voice who fights by their side.

"THE INDIAN RAILWAYS STRIKE OF 1974" (*Shows the Power of Organized Labour*)

AN ICONIC PICTURE OF GEORGE FERNANDES

'JEENA HAI TOH MARNA SEEKHO KADAM KADAM PAR LADNA SIKHO'.

Unions are more active in workshops, production units and loco sheds. The unions are also supported by political leaders to a large extent. I sometimes wonder how this labour intensive organization/institute has turned into a sluggish organization with overly centralised control by the management. Rail transport is the most economical mode of mass transportation, and the Government is also trying to keep it that way and trying to improve the quality of services. The number of railway staff required to run services adequately is comparatively less in proportion owing to an alarming growth of the number of commuters. This creates tension and stress among the railway staff. Indian Railways run by the Government of India follow the tradition-bound value system. The technical staff are the back bone of railways and the management is trying to break that backbone. Unions turn blind eye to the distress of staff.

Unions have done certain constructive works for the staff, but still, it carries a negative image. The traditional image of unionism is perfectly carried on by railway unions. Historically in Indian Railways, the trade unions played to the tunes of government and Railway management, to keep the working class "disciplined". The union leaders have always been "rewarded" for this "job". By and by, the distance between the officially recognized unions and the rank and file widened, because ordinary railway men no longer saw the unions as representing their interests before the government. Officers are projecting their inefficiency onto the railway staff stating that staff doesn't work/sluggish and unions are crippling the work culture; how come they are able to run the trains smoothly without us working at ground level.

Participation of railway employees in management (PREM), platform for the railway employees for their representation and to have a say in policymaking. Please don't use this medium for fulfilling your vested political interests. Fight for the right cause on the side of workers. You have to give strength to the workers as well as for the organization, unions are not to be seen as unnecessary nuisance creators, protesting against every new reform in Indian Railways. Employees are seeking the help of political leaders for addressing their problems, this shows the mistrust of employees in union leaders. You are placed in those positions to serve some purpose, to be a voice of the employee's problems; don't let them down.

To face the current challenges, labour unions must embrace newer operating methods, be technologically updated, less politically motivated, and speak the language of the new age worker whose work environment is drastically different from the old-world praxis.

'One should learn from the past, but one should not live in the past. My concern is to look to the future, learn from the past, and deal with the present'- George Fernandes.

'It is the characteristics of a free and democratic nation that it has free and independent labor unions'-Franklin Roosevelt

'The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, the poor'- A Philip Randolph.

'The Labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress'- Martin Luther King Jr.

DEPARTMENTAL SILOS AND DEPARTMENTALISM

As pointed out by many previous committees over the years, the Indian Railways organization has grown into an overly centralised and hierarchical organisation. The feeling of departmentalism adversely affects the working culture in the IR [Indian Railways] and has resulted in actions and decisions based on narrow departmental goals instead of on organisational objectives or benefits,". Bibek Debroy committee highlighted the gravity of the problem, 'Departmentalism' manifests itself in the form of unhealthy competition among departments for appropriating a larger share of scarce resources; injurious competition for usurping a larger share of key general management posts for **better access to power, authority** etc; a clamour for pursuing narrow departmental goals at the cost of organisational goals and objectives; and a lack of teamwork and cohesion.' This has already been addressed by many committees, how this departmentalism is affecting the railways. This is nurtured even at the top management level.

The Bibek Debroy Committee has explained how different amenities in the station are overlooked by different departmental persons. As users of IR services, we often don't appreciate the silos that exist in IR. Think of a station. Who takes care of station amenities? Platforms, drinking water, toilets, waiting rooms, and over-bridges are the responsibility of civil engineering. Lights, lifts, escalators, fans, and water-coolers are looked after by electrical. Public address systems, departure boards, and train indicator boards are the responsibility of telecom. Reservation and ticketing are commercial (with IT thrown in). Everything on-board (including sockets, fans, and lights) is mechanical. I did say drinking water is the responsibility of civil engineering. But, do remember, water-coolers are the responsibility of electrical. Within a station, there are tracks, platforms, places where passengers wait, toilets, and perhaps even trains that come in. These need to be cleaned. In one station I visited, I counted 17 different cleaning contracts (duplication of works/tenders). Having so many departments taking care of different amenities of one station / a Unit, it will be incurring too much loss. As optimality is compromised due to working in silos. Every department has to conduct workshops, seminars to build healthy work environment and cordial relationships. Even in the same department, communication gap is too high, how can you expect smooth coordination between other departments?

Departments hardly work in cooperation. If any mishaps happen in railways, the blame game is a big thing, every department will be blaming the other department (There is a tendency to obtain approval or sanction of higher authority for perceived immunity). For the smooth running of trains, all the departments have to coordinate/work hand in hand and work so closely. Ending departmentalism in one go is not an easy task. Symptoms of 'departmentalism' include turf wars for control of assets and or derail

decision-making and come in the way of developing a coherent vision for the organisation and rational decision-making. Hope Indian railway management system (IRMS) will

- End departmentalism
- Promote healthy working culture of railways
- Expedite decision-making
- Create a coherent vision for the organisation.
- Promote rational decision-making.

Unification of services will end 'departmentalism', promote the smooth working of Railways, expedite decision-making, create a coherent vision for the organisation and promote rational decision-making. Railway Board will no longer be organised on departmental lines and replaced with a leaner structure organised on functional lines. This historic reform will go a long way in achieving the Government's vision of making Indian Railways the growth engine of India's Vikas yatra.

Very recent major restructuring of railways; include closure of key establishments, merger of decades old organizations and private participation in running schools and hospitals. Recommendations of principal economic adviser for rationalisation of Govt. bodies and proposal for the Ministry of Railways calls for winding up the CORE, COFMOW, CRIS & IROAF. Identifying sick PSU's and either merging them or scrapping them. Merging of RailTel with IRCTC, RVNL with IRCON. Merger of railway schools with Kendriya Vidyalayas or handing over to the respective state governments.

Another major reform recommended was to establish central public sector enterprises (CPSE) to bring eight production units under its fold. This would mean that the assets, infrastructure and employees of three coach factories — Integral Coach Factory, Chennai; Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala; Modern Coach Factory, Rae-Bareli; three locomotive manufacturing units – Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, Chittaranjan; Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi; Diesel Loco Modernisation Works, Patiala and two Rail Wheel Units at Yelahanka (Bengaluru) and Bela (Bihar), would be transferred to the proposed CPSE. Merger of Central Training Institutes with the National Rail and Transportation Institute after upgrading the latter into a Central University and an Institute of National Importance, roping in private participation for investments to enhance healthcare facilities open to all in the railway hospitals and health units/polyclinics was also proposed, the sources added. "IROAF was largely managing tenders. It could neither act as a knowledge bank nor acquire any useful expertise or skill-set by building its own laboratory or a research unit,"- said while scrapping of IROAF. And the closure of IRSDC based on the recommendations of principal economic advisor "Rationalisation of government bodies". Large organizations can be slow to adapt to changes, but lack of due diligence in organizations to adapt to the world trends, will face the same.

'Silos builds the wall in people's minds and creates the barriers in organizations hearts'- *Pearl Zhu*

RIDDLES IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

Misuse of Public funds:

The problem of corruption is deep-rooted in Indian Railways. It starts at the recruitment stage in the form of accepting bribes for the selection of a candidate. There are many cases reported of bribes for promotions in the personnel department. Inflating the bills and tampering with purchases of materials in the stores department is not new. The engineering department is not behind in these activities. It Deals with contractors, price corrections, false tenders, fixation of bids are the types of corruption in the engineering department. Optimal utilization of funds is only a bookish term in reality it is different. Unnecessary work over rules the necessary work in railways. Bribing/Lobbying is common behind the curtains. This disease is spread from higher levels to lower levels. Corruption has been reduced to a large extent in recent times. There are Black sheep here and there, but we can't pass blanket Judgment about IR.

Even though the Recruitment Board is sincerely attempting to make the recruitment procedure transparent, the opportunists search for some loopholes in it and benefit themselves. Strict checks and surprise visits by vigilance departments (from outside of railways) should be done to control such activities. Ethical values should be a part of officers' training. Unfortunately, we don't have a meter/gauge to check the ethical values of the employee/officer. Corruption in Bureaucracy is not a new thing, the unholy nexus between politics and bureaucracy was one of the main factors for widespread corruption in the country. So many layers of trust and counter trusts, checks and balances. Everybody is a cheat unless you make sure you can't cheat, and yet people cheat. The Britishers didn't trust the local people, so they created this.

Indian railway is outsourcing all its non-core activities. It is a good move to provide better service to the commuters. To improve the private participation in railways, it has to be a win-win situation for the railways and the private contractor/firm. Management is depending more on private persons for every possible work in IR. Employees have to be trained how to work in the PPP working environment. Outdated practices burdening the Government by burning public money (https://railwhispers.com/?p=6093 nice article on glitches in railway tendering process). Accountability of any failure is lacking in railways, just blame the ground staff and move on (You can see a lot of paperwork to avoid the blame, everyone wants to save their skin). This is the agony of every railway employee. Already, the Bibek Debroy Committee has explained how different amenities in the station are overlooked by different departmental persons. **Having so many departments taking care of different amenities of one station / a Unit, it will be incurring too much loss as optimality is compromised.**

On a trivial note, in railways the commercial and Engineering (Civil) departments have a lot of craze. As the commercial department is the one who is responsible for collecting the tariff, it is the revenue source for the railways. The engineering department (Civil) department spends the majority of funds (Revenue/CAPEX expenditure for infrastructure building & maintenance of assets). On a lighter note, Engineering being a mammoth department, other departmental officers feel inferior. Railway officers are totally away from the media/public attention, they have the free hand to do corruption without any fear and also have the least political interference. Most of the tenders i.e., service/work-related tenders are allotted to close friends/relatives/to the person who gives more commissions, (now with increase in transparency, lobbying decreased). The railway contractors will be quoting their price, keeping in view of all these stages of commissions. If any unknown contractor quotes without knowing this, he will go bankrupt or has to leave the work midway. On papers/files, it seems to be very clean, as if there are no traces of corruption (we have a rigid system for preparing audit proof files). But in reality, it is quite the opposite. The purpose of calling for tenders is to ensure transparency in awarding government contracts which run into thousands of crores. That's the theory, but in reality, it is an altogether different story, with many politicians and bureaucrats devising ingenious way to 'fix' the bidding process. Irregularities in public procurements is a well-known fact. The finance department ensures optimal use of revenue/capital and avoid misuse of funds. Railway Vigilance department, a regulatory body (An anti-corruption watchdog) is responsible to eliminate or minimize the scope for corruption or any malpractices. Railway contractors are getting rich & rich and exploiting the scarce resources. 'Every leap of civilization was built off the back of a disposable workforce'. No one cares about the working conditions of our migrant construction workers. Directly/Indirectly we are encouraging informal sector through contract outsourcing.

Railways should question itself "Why poor quality of work in railway projects, even though we spend crores of rupees". In Indian Railways, the administration/management is playing to the tunes of the contractors, then how can we expect quality of work in the railway projects. Please develop a rigid system for monitoring the prestigious station redevelopment projects which are planned to being executed by EPC mode of contracts **(the project targets, should not compromise on the quality of work)**. Railway officers are dancing to the tunes of contractors; then how come you expect quality of work in IR. Officers give more priority and respect to the contractors than to the subordinate railway employees. The Indian Railways suffers from a dilemma of identity vested with social obligation: is it a commercial entity or a government department trying to work on commercial principles? As the only "earning" department/Ministry of the Government of India that fully meets the salary, and (till recently) the pension obligations, of its serving and retired employees out of its own earnings, it has always been an outlier. The pressure to project an image of a public undertaking that is financially viable is, therefore, immense. This explains the tendency to fiddle with financial statistics. Time is not so far railways will face the reality, just like BSNL.

Elite mentality and Officer Syndicate, Alienation of Labour class:

No doubt this is a British elite service, with only the rich and well economic class /set of people entering the service, UPSC has turned into an examination for the rich, resourceful, and powerful. The Government provides them well furnished, well-maintained Bungalows, vehicles, servants, officers' cabins, cozy cottages-officers rest houses, by providing all this expecting him to be a government servant is foolish, definitely he will behave like a master. It is good that the Govt. is trying to end the old norms by ending 'VVIP culture'- removing 'lal batti' 'bungalow peons', 'trying to bring transparency in Governance/recruitments'. In the competitive exams also, there is a class divide. These UPSC exams are being conducted/taking place every year regularly, but the bottom level posts (Mass recruitments) are only filled/released one year before elections (Especially in railways). They have the 'batch year' as they are recruited every year regularly unlike other labour class employees. The vicious discrimination between a promote officer and a direct recruited officer is a harsh reality in Indian railways.

The unity among the UPSC officers is rock solid, that they won't allow the promoted officer to join their group, and they don't even treat them equally. The **IRSE lobby** is so strong that we can't even speak against them because they control the administration at every level of the pyramid. Their syndicate is so strong that no employee dares to raise their voice against them. This syndicate is giving more power to them, making them supreme leaders. The officer doesn't do any kind of wrong, because they are administrators, only the labourers are to be blamed, this is an Elite class divide. Bureaucrats develop a disease after few years of service. If they don't like something (pretty things) about a junior, they develop an itch that can only be cured when they humiliate the junior in a meeting of other officers. This disease is common in human beings. As you gain some access to some temporary power you develop fragile ego. No one is above humanity. If you challenge it the creator gets in action. Railway administration is also biased towards class-A officers, posting only IRSE officers in key positions. The vertical hierarchy has to be maintained in order to get the work done from the subordinates, but the 'tall' hierarchy and Feudalistic mentality in railways is barbaric. Restructuring railways is not such an easy task that you just modify the name and unify all the group -A level posts. There is much more to be done, to improve the railway working culture and for the betterment of railway services. A mere reorganizational at the top level doesn't do any good for the railways, it has to be done at every level of hierarchy.

Officers lack basic etiquette

- To treat others with respect.
- Treat subordinates with respect.
- Have some gratitude towards the working class employees.

There should be officers who are more

- Sensible to the hardships of ground workers
- Who treat others with respect
- Give more than you take
- Be the goodness that you seek
- Don't take your subordinates for granted.
- Humbleness has to be praised.
- Down to earth and modest.

Employee Empowerment — Optimal Utilization of staff:

The empowerment of employees through releasing their talents and abilities, meeting their inner needs and engaging employees with moral commitment is an essential feature of organisation in the information age. Employee empowerment is one of the important components of shaping a strong work culture in the organisation. Empowered employees have a sense of belongingness and excitement in their jobs. Railways have insufficient staff with the use of latest technology and efficient utilization of staff railways can perform better and provide better services with the available staff. Multi-tasking and better utilization of manpower resources are helping in massive productivity gain (Efficient utilization doesn't mean to break their backbones). **We don't pick the right person for the right job**. Every officer is well aware of the efficacy of each and every employee working under him. **Place the right person in the right place**. **Correct people in correct position can make the public sector much better**. In recent years railways have recruited many group-C, group-D posts, but the training which they were given is not up to the mark and is outdated. A constant learning process has to happen; we have to upgrade our skills. Up-skilling has to be a constant process. The training and motivation of the employees result in the development of confidence and self-respect. The training institutes lack skilful teachers. As most of the non-core activities are getting outsourced (BPO). We have to train employees on how to work in a PPP environment. The mass skilling exercise under 'Project Saksham' aims for image makeover of Indian Railways by increasing the productivity and efficiency of its employees is a good initiative. With growing rail network, new trains, different high quality services designed by the railways and the promise of the government to deliver superior and safe rail services and growing expectation of our passengers and commuters for better amenities and services, it is imperative that the railway employees rise to the occasion to deliver on the promise. Employees can and do deliver only when they have the right skills, knowledge and the mindset to deliver to the new standards of excellence that the organization hold from them all. Regular refresher training will not only upgrade skill of each of the employees, but also go a long-way in improving the performance of the Indian Railways.

Favouritism in postings, transfers & delay in promotions:

The transfer of an employee takes place for various reasons. It may be either out of efficiency or inefficiency of the person. An employee who is skilled and is able to grasp more and more knowledge can be transferred to another department to increase the efficiency of that particular department. In contrast to this, there may be certain employees who are not working efficiently as per the expectations. Hence, they will be transferred to some less productive departments. Transfer also works as a kind of motivation or punishment. An employee gets motivated when he is transferred to some area of work which he is keenly interested in. An employee loses his seniority in case of transfer to a different division or zone. He has to start from scratch. It discourages the employee to demand the transfer to his native place. He might have his own residential house in his native place, or there may be any other reason for demanding the transfer. The transfer policies needs to be revived. The policies like promotion by performance appraisal are not according to the expectations of the employees. Promotions are not highly performance-based. The tenure of service decides the promotion of an individual. This is highly discouraging for skilled and bright employees.

- **Promotions:** The promotions in railways/Govt. will happen in batches where most of the people who joined together will be promoted together, meaning that the excellent and the worst performer will be on par. For an individual with high ambitions and great belief in one's own abilities, a railway is a bad option. Railways have a poor promotion policy.

- **Dissatisfaction: If you are dissatisfied with the job or your boss, you won't be able to freely move from one organization to another** like in the private sector. Even if you decide to switch over to the private sector, you might find it difficult to adjust after getting accustomed to the culture of a government entity. Also, all the effort you have put in to clear the exams to get into the establishment will not prove fruitful.

The political interference during promotions and transfer of the staff is another hurdle in effectively implementing the rights by the authorities. The administrative officer will have full power in your postings, if you have higher recommendations you will be getting better place of posting. Merit is not considered in the allotment of the posting place. It is the wish of the controlling officer. Certain decisions are taken at the departmental level regarding the transfer or promotion of an employee, and suddenly the divisional authorities order changes in such decisions. It again raises the question about the genuine allocation of authority and responsibility. The postings and transfers are done by the personnel department on recommendations from the respective JAG/SAG officers of the department. At least in the initial years of service, employees should be given with their desired place of postings.

All the UPSC officers will be getting time-bound promotions without considering any merit/competitiveness. But for the labour class, their promotions depends upon the mercy of the administration. The promotion prospects are too poor in railways. I have seen many employees in the same post category from joining. If you want to go into the administrative posts you have to pass the exam, which is reasonable as those posts requires certain type of skillset/merit. But many people think cracking the ESE/UPSC exam is easier than to prepare for the LDCE exam (LDCE Syllabus include Establishment Code, Financial code, Engineering Code, G&SR, DAR & Conduct Rules, IRPWM, GCC, C&W, S&T Rule books, ACTM, SOP, SOD, Works manual, RDSO & CAMTECH manuals, Railway board circulars, Traction Manual, Accident manual, Block work manual) and cracking the exam with only single-digit vacancies is tough. Centralized CBT exam conducted by NAIR for promotion to Group 'B' posts is a good decision. Without compromising the efficiency of the administration, experience and talent should work together. Supervisors/Technicians learn a lot in their service, but they are not getting the power/chance to implement their ideas. We are the ones who maintain the entire section, we are the ones who runs the trains, we give fitness certificate to the track & Locos, and we are the ones who do POH & IOH of the coaches. There is no level playing ground for all in railways for promotions. Lag in promotions of labour class employees, time bound promotions for IRSE officers, but voluntary and forced retirements only for labour class in public interest. Financial up-gradation under the MACP scheme is beneficial for the employees. Promotion by performance appraisal is not according to the expectations of the employees as it is creating more of a master and slave relationship, it has to be rationalized. How would one's performance be judged in an unbiased manner? Railways has to break all this bottlenecks to achieve its goals.

Why most of the Engineers are hesitant to join in railways, why do they choose SSC-JE/ State jobs over RRB-JE?

1. Supervisors are slaves in railways, sandwiched in between officers and workers. Our day starts at 7:00 AM & has no fixed duty/working hours. The Supervisors has to be available 24*7 on duty (CUG number is a mental torture in railways and social messaging apps- WhatsApp office groups).
2. As scope of work is not defined, despite being an engineer the works in which we are involved are totally non-core, contract work have been a great headache , have to deal with the unskilled and complacent kind of personnel, no work life balance due to 24 hours services, despite with huge responsibility we possess minimal powers, other departments does not coordinate accordingly, always afraid of getting charge sheet or punishment even of small negligence, no career growth , very less scope of switching jobs.
3. At every stage and at every level we have to prove our worth to get the promotion or to continue in the service. But the UPSC officers will be getting time bound promotions without any skillset test. Before your retirement you will be promoted to Group B as a complimentary gift.

4. Most of the employees get 3 or 4 promotions or even more in their service in railways, except JEs & SSEs. Consequently, there is extreme stagnancy & resultant frustration amongst the incumbents of the Grade- C especially amongst the rail engineers. Less unity among Group-C employees is also affecting the cadre in achieving their goals and fighting for their rights. Getting Group-B status doesn't do much good to them, working nature doesn't change much.
5. There has been a substantial increase in the duties and responsibilities over the years of the rail Engineers (JEs & SSEs) due to modernization and advancement of technology in the railways, but this has not been recognized or remunerated in any manner whatsoever especially in the case of engineers. Engineers are highly qualified and occupy a critical role, but the treatment given to them has always been unfair. Supervisor is a punching bag in railways.
6. This issue is not a new thing, this has been raised by the employees/unions at various forums/occasions for years, but still administration is hesitant to draw a permanent solution to the problem. The administration is also biased towards labour class, they only favour UPSC officers.
7. Considering the unemployment scenario in India, many higher educated people are willing to join the low qualifying jobs, please don't take them for granted.
8. The duties of open line JEs and SSEs are arduous in nature. We are working in open environment under the sky. The 24*7 work, exposure to hot sun, heavy rain, cold climate and unhygienic work areas, particularly the presence of human excreta and other non-biodegradable wastes are posing continued health risks.
9. Today the staff strength is lower than the benchmark. Whenever new trains were introduced & new sections were commissioned, a proportionate addition of manpower was not done adequately. This results in more stress on existing staff strength. Work stress related health issues like diabetes, high BP and hearth diseases are highest in the cadre of SSEs and JEs among all railway men.
10. Execution of work through employees hired by Railway contractors who are neither qualified nor trained is more difficult and involves high risk. In the absence of Railway Technicians or when a smaller number of them is available, most of the responsibilities and accountabilities fall on the heads of JE and SSE. Employees hired by Railway contractors are grossly underpaid so they cannot form a reliable and competent workforce. The problem is getting further aggravated when Railway contractors keep on changing their hired employees on a daily basis. These arguments are also applicable for items supplied by private firms to Railways. Tendency to bypass or skip procedures and to push in inferior quality materials or services are major threats not only for this category of employees but for the Railways and its customers. We are committed engineers working for the betterment of railways kindly #Save-Supervisors in railways.

'Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one.'- Bruce Lee.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

There are many committee reports and recommendations by many eminent personalities. But there is a difference, between the people who see it from a third perspective and those who live in that society. The observations/findings are the ones, which I have seen from the close quarters, the news articles I have read about IR, interviews of veteran railway officers, Research Journals & thesis (major portion of information is taken from a PhD thesis mentioned in reference & Bibek Debroy Committee Report).

Broadly speaking all the departments in Indian railways can be categorized as,

1. **Maintenance, (**all the technical departments are the backbone of Indian railways).
   a. Engineering dept., responsible for track maintenance and providing general amenities at stations.
   b. Mechanical dept., maintenance of Locos, coaches & rakes and on board housekeeping services.
   c. S&T dept., responsible for looking after the signaling and telecommunication for train movement.
   d. Electrical dept., responsible for providing reliable power supply to the train and to the stations.
2. **Stores,** department looking after the procurement of stock & non-stock items and scrap disposal.
3. **Operating**, responsible for movement of goods & passenger trains by maintaining punctuality.
4. **Running**, department responsible for rolling of rail wheels/locomotive.
5. **Personnel/HR**, looking after the staff postings, transfers, promotions, welfare & grievances etc.
6. **Commercial**, ticket booking, ticket checking, parcel booking, handling fright bookings & looking after all the commercial activities of railways. Looking after the mobilization of resources.
7. **Accounts/Finance**, responsible for planning and optimal utilization of resources, improving operating ratio.
8. **Security**, The guardians of railway assets. Providing security on trains & at stations from mischiefs.
9. **Medical,** department responsible for providing health care services for the railway employees.

All the departments have to work in harmony (hand in hand) then only we can run the system smoothly. Railways being a multi departmental, multi-disciplinary organization having distinct horizontal and vertical relatives amongst various departments. The synergetic contribution of all these departments is vital for optimum output for the entire railway network spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Breaking of silos is needed at every juncture, at the unwieldy railway board, zonal railway and divisional offices and at depot/stations. There should only be two wings in every department, it may be mechanical, electrical, S&T, or Civil engineering, one which looks over all the passenger amenities and one which deals with the running of trains & attending the failures and day to day maintenance.

Personnel

There is a lot of file movement in personnel department, which can be reduced by revising schedule of powers. Some examples are-

- Approval of inter divisional & inter railway mutual transfers is given by HQ. Whereas if division has screened DAR/vigilance record & concerned branch has no objection then it should be processed directly. We have to take steps to reduce the political interference in transfers and place of postings. Transfers and place of postings has to be purely based on the merit and service record.
- Proposals of Ex-gratia payments are sent to HQ. Delegation should be given to DRM for quick disposal. Number of clerks can be reduced if processes are simplified.
- Electronic grievance redress system has been installed to acknowledge all the representations, letters etc. There is no segregation between actual grievance and routine letters. Secondly quality of reply needs improvement. As a result, grievances are not coming down rather people are taking help of CPGRAM & RTI to solve their grievance. If NIVARAN- Staff Grievance portal is made available for grievances, only then real benefit can be derived. Grievance module is provided in HRMS portal, but to raise the anomalies in the system, employee anonymity has to be maintained.
- HRMS has to be a bridging portal between the employee and the personal (HR) department, every claim and communication has to be done from this portal. E-SR's aren't getting updated correctly, so many errors in the employee personal and service records. Still a long way to go for its full implementation.
- Service and conduct rules (DAR rules) are to be updated timely, we can't run the trains at 180 kmph with old set of rules and regulations framed during steam engines period.
- There are few complaints in Accounts and RPF as they deal with establishment themselves. Other departments can also do this. Personnel should only look after recruitment, HOER, general issues like staff welfare, issue of passes, policy issues etc.
- There is so much to write about process of settlement, working of WLIs, poor knowledge of clerks, no value addition by Chief OS/OS in any file etc. This article cannot deal all aspects.
- Most of the Medically De-categorized employees are from running and open line maintenance departments, mainly track maintainers, technicians and loco pilots. Railways can't afford to absorb all of them as ministerial staff or provide them with suitable alternative job. Policies has to be framed to improve their working conditions, no facility of recreational activities The HR policies of railways are also to be amended in that direction, creating healthy work environment.
- Establishment related issues does not get solved easily even in case of pay grade fixation and salary matters. No one is happy with the working style of personal department.

Accounts:

There is only one complaint from employees that payments are not passed in time. Regular payments are made in time but other items suffer. Eg. Supplementary bills, Settlement of Death & VR cases. Department is not acknowledging receipt of bills, which is a must. For all proposals there should be standard formats giving full particulars so that it is concurred in one go. Delegation has to be given to every department to upload their own muster and TA particulars in AIMS portal. There are lot of delays in correcting some mistake in pension payment orders. There are lot of delays in transfer of PF accounts on transfer. Activity wise costing must be recorded to analyze our expenses correctly. It will help in correcting operating ratio.

Safety:

To achieve target of zero accidents, following steps are essential

- Joint measurements must be on a standard proforma, which should mention standard values as well. Supervisors must be trained for this activity.
- **If work is to be done as laid down in the manuals, adequate manpower and infrastructure must be available. Otherwise we are encouraging shortcuts.**
- With accelerated downsizing of staff in view of technical upgradation; maintenance of section is becoming difficult. Manpower has to be maintained/planned within the yardsticks of operations and maintenance (O&M). Failures are increasing day by day, without adequate staff for maintenance of assets and smooth running of train is becoming more difficult.
- We know about retirements in advance so indents to be placed in time. RRBs can start the process in advance and give the panel as soon as indent arrives. Instead of activity in series, it should be in parallel.
- A separate department to look after the safety concerns and reporting to the higher ups is obsolete/outdated practice. We have to check for the redundancy of posts with upgradation of technology frequently.
- Inspections are done as if the officers knew everything (colonial practice) and the temporary arrangements done for the GM inspection costs railways a hefty amount. Most of the time is wasted in preparing inspection notes and preparing compliance for the inspection particulars.
- Inquiry must find the truth. For this safety department must conduct independent inquiry. Inquiry committee must not include divisional officers, who are responsible for maintenance.

Engineering:

Supervisors & staff are fully occupied with track maintenance. Works matters are getting little attention and planning. More supervisors & officers are required who can look after land cell & works matters. Similar to operating & commercial, two wings are required in engineering, Track & Works. Railway is

loosing heavily due to encroachments. Digitization of land records will help but without adequate Manning and clear Responsibility results will not be commensurate. Time should be the essence of contracts but there are long extensions beyond completion period are routine. DRMs should be given more funds to get urgent works done. Track maintainers are the real foot soldiers in railways. Earlier there used to be separate construction organization under zonal level. Now with Gati-Sakti department, at divisional level unit to look after the work matters and planning with a dedicated CPM is a well verse idea for fast tracking and decentralized project management under DRM. For fast execution and deriving local solutions for local problems. Gati-Shakti unit has be under ADRM/Infra or else it become another silo in railways.

Electrical:

Electrification or any new asset should be created only when required manpower can be provided without delay. Field officer has to put in a lot of time & effort to create infrastructure. Rather he should devote time to asset maintenance. In general services, lot of items are DGS&D items in which there are quality complaints but not getting resolved. As manpower cannot be increased, there should be fittings with either Low or No maintenance. Bad quality fittings only increase maintenance work load.

Mechanical:

Cleanliness in trains can only improve if OBHS is supervised by TTEs. Similarly, adequate supervision is required at CTS locations. OBHS staff must report to TTE and supervisor to give his phone number. Most of the passenger complaints are regarding cleanliness in trains. If number of cleanings in a day are not specified, they clean only two times. As far as crew management is concerned manual record keeping is not going away even after installation of CMS. There is a lot of emphasis on running room inspections but work/proposals for major improvement are not sanctioned promptly. Electrical department has taken over the works of mechanical department due to evolution of electrical lines and electric engines.

S&T:

Lot of inputs have gone into this department e.g, improved inter locking and improved asset reliability. However full advantage of data logger reports has not been taken. Loco pilots complain of signals flying back to danger on approach. In case of lightning there are major failures. The track circuit protection is not effective against surges. More advancements in technology is pushing S&T department harder to adopt to the new trends. OEMs are controlling all the maintenance activities in railways.

Operating:

After heavy investment in FOIS, COIS, all the information & reports are available online. Still HQ conducts long conferences 2-3 times daily. This leaves with divisional officers, little time to think and plan beyond routine matters. This department has become more & more HQ driven. Sometimes other branches of the division feel that operating is not part of the Team. Traffic inspectors are utilized more in protocol duties.

G&SR needs a fresh look as communication devices were not available when it was first written. Every communication between LP and SM, PWI and SM is in the form of written memos, which is time consuming. Nowadays communication can be quick with the help of mobile or any hand held device. Punctuality is major concern in IR, railways is working hard to maintain punctuality of trains. **Most of the maintenance problems can be resolved by posting Station Masters & Points men from technical background with technical qualification. As failures are increasing day by day, with limited staff working in the depots, attending the failures without affecting train movement is a hectic job.**

Commercial:

Officers and staff are not able to handle tenders promptly. All tenders are earning tenders so every delay causes loss of earning. eg Leasing of SLRs are high value tenders where retendering or any delay in process means direct loss. As IRCTC is handling catering services, but infrastructure for delivering is still weak. Licensed vendors are much less than demand, so there is lot of scope for unauthorized vendors to flourish. Some of the base kitchens are below standard and in small area. Minimum standards must be enforced. Most of the passenger complaints are about the catering services and on board vendors.

Medical:

Strength of doctors is reducing day by day. Stop gap arrangement is appointment of contract medical practitioners. But there is need of specialists. Every year the process of empaneling referral hospital is repeated. Major changes are required otherwise system is going to collapse. Either CGHS model or group health insurance has to be adopted. Employees are not satisfied. Medical standards are to be reviewed for safety and non-safety posts according to the living trends.

Training:

There is one common aspect among all departments that quality training is not available for maintenance supervisors and technicians. We are not able to make our staff future ready and resourceful. Except running categories, other departments' staff is overdue refresher. Officers also require refresher courses. Good training is essential to extract quality from staff and officers. Private institutions must be used for specialized training. For officers more focus is on managerial skills rather than core expertise. More assistance should be given to training institutes in terms of manpower and budget. Impression that training is for surplus management must be removed. More emphasis and resources must be given for core expertise rather than management trainings. Foreign training also encourages officers to think big. Why can't we train all the railway employees under "Mission *KARMAYOGI*: Rule Based to Role Based" iGOT training. Direct recruitment in non-technical category posts has to be limited to the barest minimum possible, fill-up the vacancies in non-technical categories through GDCE exam and with medically de-categorized employees from the technical maintenance and running departmental staff.

General findings/conclusions

1. **The bureaucratic way of functioning is the aspect that leads to the imbalance between the expectations of commuters and the output generated by employees**. In a bureaucratic setup it is difficult to inculcate 'team spirit'; team spirit is critical in railway working. Lack of professional approach and discipline are other factors for which the railway is decried.
2. Stiff competition is offered from the road network. Transportation requirement is arising out of accelerated growth of the Indian economy. It has forced Indian Railways to gear up for the challenges by the present scenario. Time is not far, where the monopoly of railways will break with advancement in electric cars, hyperloop, electric highways, railway business strategy has to change. Railway shouldn't be turned into a liability, it has to be an asset and pioneer jewel for the country.
3. "Yes Sir" the use of the word, Sir, is very common in Indian officialdom. "Prior Permission". The request for permissions, generally gets passed up the pyramidal structure of the government.
4. Europeans and Anglo-Indians (now UPSC officers) lived in separate colonies in railway towns and were provided with superior types of quarters. Special amenities and privileges are provided. Separate institutions and clubs were reserved for their entertainment and relaxation, and even separate provisions were made for officers' rest houses. This colonial legacy is still being continued.
5. The railways have created special purpose vehicles to undertake a specific business or activity, and some other channels for the flow of money like IRFC, IRCTC, RITES, CRIS, DFCCIL, IRCON, RVNL, IRLDC, IRSDC, CONCOR, etc., working under the ministry of railways (MOR) some of them are listed on the stock market, to raise the capital from domestic as well as international open markets. They are working fine, because they are autonomous bodies following their own set of rules and they do follow corporate structure not bureaucratic system of administration.
6. We have institutes like CAMTECH, RDSO, COFMOW, etc., for giving standards and railway boards as a regulating body to give the directions of functioning. But still, we are behind the time using age-old technology. Recently, ministry of railways has decided to close down 'COFMOW', in line with the recommendations made by principle Economic advisor - "Rationalization of Government Bodies under Ministry of Railways". Invariably there is also a large amount of duplication and redundancy that has built up over the decades in railways
7. In railways/any organization, when a successor doesn't carry forward his/her predecessor's work and when a predecessor doesn't brief the successor, the nuisances of his/her posting - it is an administrative failure.
8. With the growing competitiveness and corporatization of Govt. institutes, changing dynamism, the decision-making process has to be quick, silo working culture is hampering the fast decision-

making. With more and more private players coming in, the policymakers are not up to the mark to frame the rules and regulations and to frame the policies to attract private investments.

9. As the government has already made up its mind to limit the presence of government. Limiting itself to only essential services, still, there are many monopoly sectors where the government has its dominance. The fact is Govt. can't be everywhere and Govt. is slowly removing its presence from the places where private players do more good than Government. Age-old infrastructure, building new technological innovations and investing in infrastructure is not possible only by the Govt. in a country like India so we adopted PPP model.
10. With the entry of more and more private players, the policymakers have to be more knowledgeable and conversant with the PPP working models. Employees have to be trained how to work in this PPP working environment. Our forefathers have seen private players-capitalists as enemies of the nation, and we also failed to educate our children that capitalists are to be seen as wealth creators, not as only profit-making bodies.
11. Indian railways is totally dependent on private players for M&P items and for implementing the latest technology. OEM manufactures are too intelligent; they are not sharing the troubleshooting process & technology. And they have a full control on spare parts to bag the AMC contracts with hefty prices and the railway is ready to pay the price.
12. The railway officials are interested more in strict follow up of rules and regulations rather than performance. Stability matters to them more than progress. This is the reason, why there were incidents of the financial crisis in Indian Railways.
13. India is on a transformational phase, due to Covid-19, all sectors have taken a hit and are facing turbulence. The Railway has taking more heat, with a total loss of passenger revenue. Management is also exploring different income sources, like running the first of its kind KISAN rail.
14. Officer compels you to do the work if anything goes wrong, you yourself are solely responsible. No one comes to your rescue, neither the officer nor your colleagues. Officer's syndicate is so strong that you can't even question them, even if you are right & haven't done any mistake.
15. To improve the work culture of the organisation, there should be a proper balance between authority and responsibility and also appropriate rights should be allocated to the concerned staff to utilize such authority. Being a public service organisation, what matters the most in the case of railways is the accountability of the staff. Only allocation of duties is not sufficient, but these duties should be accountable too. The subordinates should report from time to time about the completion of the task allocated. Generally, this aspect is absent in public service organisations. The employees are wise enough to understand their rights and forget their duties conveniently. To bring public service

institutions like railways at par with the corporate sector organisation, a lot of efforts are required to mould people in understanding and implementing their authorities and responsibilities.

16. It is the post downsizing and non-recruitment policy affecting Indian railways working culture.
17. Healthy work culture will reduce the unwillingness and stress among railway employees and cultivate a good image of Indian Railways.
18. Work pressure, untimely duties, absenteeism are some of the limitations of demoralizing the railway force.
19. If any railway employee is facing any problem, there is no proper grievance redressal mechanism. Either he has to approach Unions or has to rely on the mercy of the management/administration.
20. The implementation of human resource policies in railway departments is not effective to the most possible extent. The performance appraisal, training of employees and transfer and promotion policies lack the modern approach required for the current world. The typical characteristic of bureaucracy in the government-owned public enterprise can be seen through the implementation of such manpower related policies. Even though Indian Railway is the largest employer in the country, there are certain British Era approaches in the administration that makes the organisation less competitive and impressive.
21. Physical and technical work is given less importance than intellectual work. The pay scales of railways are discriminatory.
22. Sometimes subordinates have to suffer/ pay a high price for ego clashes between officers/Superiors. Even the promotee officers behave like the same showing off their authority (Power corrupts them), trying to control everything.
23. Still, e-office is not implemented throughout the divisions, and also at HQ level, some departments are using it (in a limited way). Paper less governance is a myth, still people are accustomed to old style and are hesitant to welcome new changes. Even though IR has CRIS, an autonomous body that develops software capacity in railways, still we are far behind in implementing digitalization.
24. Protocols are highly followed in railway departments. A lot of time is wasted on it and the intensity of work decreases. Higher authorities can overshadow subordinates, but you cannot overlook your superior higher officers, it will be treated as an offensive and punitive actions may be taken. Following the protocol with the minimum number of employees is very hard and unfeasible/impracticable for the railways. These protocols should be brought to a minimum possible extent.
25. The personnel/HR department is the worst of all the departments, they can minimize human intervention with the best usage of technology, but they are not implementing. Grievance redressal in railways is not up to the mark.

26. The generation gap in the department leads to communication gaps. The problems of seniority and juniority are severe. People become adamant about performing their job. The younger ones are not ready to seek advice from the elder ones, and the elder ones are not ready to adjust to the ideas of the younger ones. This affects the work environment.
27. Reduction in number of sanctioned posts is being done continuously over the years, **to justify outsourcing** of items/work and to award work contracts, non-filling up of vacancies and surrendering of posts are done indiscriminately. Main objectives of technological advancements in railways should be for increasing the speed, safety, comfort, efficiency and economy in train operation and not reduction of staff who are the assets of the railways.
28. Outsourcing and contract work is a major threat, particularly for this category. They have taken a heavy toll on the quality of service rendered by the Railways to its customers. Technicians of technical departments undergo training in a well-established system to make them competent to do any particular work and to acquire basic knowledge about the system of Railway working. But Railway suppliers and contractors don't engage qualified employees and they are not trained.

Findings/Conclusions related to Officers

1. Most of the officers prefers to be cooperative with subordinates. They are also keen to be socially connected with them. It is their preferred working style. Most of the officers show a typical bureaucratic approach and are concerned more with strict follow up of rules and regulations than actual productivity. Officers over estimate/exaggerate their position of power.
2. Most of the officers are happy with the kind of cooperation they receive from their subordinates. It increases their confidence and support. The real asset of an officer is his supervisor.
3. Most of the officers prefer daily records and oral warnings as the better ways to maintain discipline in the department. Maintaining daily records of such a large span of control becomes difficult most of the time. Oral warning works effectively. Officers are usually against punitive actions, but the issue of memos is a regularly used instrument for discipline. Memos are of different kinds and are applicable for breach of various rules and regulations. It affects the career of an employee, but it is equally necessary to maintain proper discipline in the department.
4. The leadership style of the officers is generally a combination of autocratic and bureaucratic styles. Sometimes leaders make the subordinates follow proper rules and regulations. It is seen by the researcher that the subordinates have the tendency to follow the leader blindly. They have full trust and faith in their leader. The leaders in every department should make use of this faith for getting the work done through subordinates.

5. Most of the decisions in railway offices are generated at the Railway Board level. They are communicated to the zonal and divisional levels and the departmental officers have to implement them. Major communication is in writing. Interpersonal communication is much stronger than vertical communication.
6. Lavish Bungalows, Domestic servants, officers' rest houses, cozy cottages, saloons/inspection cars (Saloons are running heaven on track, a well-furnished rail provided with saloon attendants and customized kitchen), rail clubs. Social/private parties-following the same British legacy.
7. Value sharing in the department is rare amongst railway officers.
8. Absenteeism is a major problem in value development in the department. The staff remains frequently absent because of some or the other reason.
9. The Strength of the staff is a major problem in almost all departments. It becomes difficult for the officers to manage the departmental work with the available staff. It also affects the superior-subordinate relationship to a large extent. The stress level of officers goes up and results in physical or psychological problems. The machinery and technology used in the department are obsolete, which reduces the efficiency and speed of work.
10. The perceptions of officers and their behaviour were not the same. Departmental officers follow a liberal approach while decision-making. They try to maintain cordial relationships with all. Very few officers like to communicate the decisions from the higher authorities, but the working style of the organisation compels them to do so. The concentrated system of decision-making does not give much freedom to the officers to make their own decisions. Also, the subordinates are hardly involved in administrative matters. They are only supposed to follow the instructions. There is very little scope for the creativity and innovative ideas to be used for the functioning of the department.
11. The communication style in the department is typically bureaucratic. The officers will give the instructions and the subordinates are supposed to follow them. Active involvement of subordinates is very less.
12. Favouritism is active in its own way. Senior persons are consulted, but are not allowed to participate in the final decision-making process. There is no transparency in the circulation of information in the department.
13. The majority of the officers feel stagnant in their roles. The job profile hardly allows them to show their skills and creativity. According to them, there is hardly any scope for innovation. It is mainly due to stereotyped work performed by them for years together. The nature of technical work is quite stressful. Officers get tense while performing their job. Most of the officers are happy and content in their job, but still the satisfaction is not to the fullest.

14. There are certain job profiles where officers come across stress while at work. The number of officers experiencing stress frequently and very frequently is high. It is mainly due to the severity and intensity of the matter, decisions making and responsibilities attached with it.
15. The attitude of departmental officers towards their job is seen to be highly positive. The credit goes mainly to the stability and job guarantee. I feel proud because“ I am a member of India's biggest working family “. Anyway, as compared with“ firing private corporate culture“ it's far better to be in the Indian Railway. There is no sword hanging on their head for losing the job. It is the most important factor in today’s competitive world (where algorithms dictate your work/business). The situation in the private sector is exactly the opposite. No one is sure about job security.
16. The officers are keen on developing values in the department. The problems like corruption and shortage of funds hamper their noble intentions. Due to a shortage of staff, an additional burden is created on the existing employees and automatically stretches the superior-subordinate relationships.
17. Being in an officer position controlling 100's of staff is not so easy, they have to be authoritative. I can understand, but this will have an adverse effect on the employee while discharging his/her duties.
18. DAR and rules & regulations are framed in favour of officers. The partition of management and labour still strongly exists in orthodox organisations like the Indian Railway.
19. ‘***To prove their worth to their bosses, some officers/supervisors are exploiting the subordinate employees***’. Some of the officers are selfish enough to show their efficiency by cutting staff strength. This benefits them in future in terms of promotion and rewards.
20. With great power there come greater responsibilities, officers don't take any responsibilities, they only enjoy the power. If any adverse incident happens, to be on the safer side they blame others (True leaders always take the responsibilities — Abdul Kalam ji). But in railways, officers always find a scapegoat to blame. It is the absolute power vested in those posts/positions which is making them demigods.
21. The shortage of staff on one side and targets to be achieved on the other. Moreover, restructuring compels them to release one per cent posts every year. It further brings down the number of employees in the department. The superior-subordinate relations are stretched, number of employees are reducing but the amount of work is increasing day by day.
22. Gazetted officers of railways are still enjoying the legacy and royal treatment of the British era. Times have changed but the impact of the British is still the same. Railway officers are also served royally on their duty. They are enjoying the **Halo effect** created around those posts. Officers are taking undue advantage of this. The attitude they develop over the years is too scary.

Findings/Conclusions related to Subordinate Staff

1. The attitude of subordinate staff is highly positive towards their employer/railways. It is a source of earning their livelihood. Their families are highly dependent on their job for survival. The long tenure of service creates a bond between the employer and employee. Hence employees feel proud to be owned by the railways as their staff.
2. The stress levels of the Group D employees are higher. They are involved in heavy work activities. Their work is more of physical nature. Gangmen, khalasis, pointsmen, gatemen have to work hard in all seasonal conditions. The running staff feels the pressure more than the clerical staff.
3. The treatment given to group D employees by the officers is sometimes inferior and insulting. It creates a sense of rage and annoyance in their mind. This results directly in underperformance at work. The discrimination in terms of compensation is a matter of concern for the group D employees. In spite of the heavy work the remuneration paid is considerably low.
4. The attitude of subordinates to complete only the allocated task is disturbing sometimes. As the job profile of each individual is fixed no one would go out of the way to do any additional task. This limits the possibilities of work distribution and completion of work on time.
5. The mission of the organisation is a matter of pride for every employee. Most of the subordinate staff is aware of the mission even though they were not able to word it properly. The mission carries the value to be developed among the employees. It is observed that the subordinates are not oriented properly about the values to be inculcated in the department.
6. Regular absenteeism and political interference are the two major concerns in the development of values in the department. Values like discipline, sincerity and punctuality are expected to be spread in the department. Employees remain absent quite often and also not serious and sincere towards their work. Favouritism prevails on a large scale. The seniority issue is given a lot of importance.
7. People are not ready to work beyond their job profiles. The political parties interfere in every small matter related to employees and want to highlight their importance. This atmosphere is not healthy for developing a healthy work culture. The work environment is not very positive and people work with their grudges on. Value development is a difficult task in such a work environment.
8. The monetary and non-monetary aspects are equally important for them. In fact, it is observed that the subordinate staff is more happy and content if the superior is considerate and the working conditions are comfortable.
9. The facilities in the department like the strength of the staff, computers, furniture, latest machinery and technology and water and sanitation facilities are most important to run the department. Shortage of staff is strongly felt by the subordinates. Latest machinery and technology is not

available in the department as well as for the training of the employees. The computers are made available but their number is not sufficient in comparison to the strength of employees.

10. The policies like promotion performance appraisal are not according to the expectations of the employees. Promotions are not highly performance-based. The tenure of service decides the promotion of an individual. This is highly discouraging for skilled and bright employees.
11. The feedback is given by the officers about the work carried on by the subordinates. There is a system of regular reporting about the completion of work and achievement of targets in the department. The staff reports to the supervisor and the supervisor report to the chief supervisor about the completion of the work in the department. Superiors are available easily for communication but generally, it is not welcomed if the hierarchy is broken. The subordinates are supposed to go through proper channels only.
12. The frequency of stress is higher in technical and operational staff than in clerical staff. The question of work-life balance arises mainly in the case of running and technical staff. Their working hours are not fixed.
13. The station masters have a long list of duties. Any activity related to the running of the train and railway station has to be handled by him. I think station master post must be made a **technical post rather than a non-technical post**, considering the kind of duties he handle, like point operations, signal control, isolator operation, token exchange. With electronic interlocking system he should have a minimum knowledge of troubleshooting, always a person from the technical departments cannot come from the depot and rectify the problem who is kilometers away from the station.
14. G&SR and SWR rules can be better understood by a technical background person, who is better equipped to understand the technical aspects in it. I still can't understand the relevance of SWR rule book in this smart phone era. (For those who don't know what is SWR- It is a rule book explaining to a non-technical person how he should handle the technical equipment's/machinery and how he should handle the train movement. Technical categorization of station master post will have a major advantage for railways in multitasking as well as holding the staff accountable for delay of trains (helps in avoiding blame game).
15. In railways/any organization, the actual working people would be low, but the people doing show off and questioning your work/pointing-out other's work would be more (office politics). The people who will be doing more show off & managing the higher officials (appeasing higher officials) are the most dangerous elements to spoil the healthy work environment.
16. The pension cases of the operating and technical staff are not resolved quickly as compared to the officers. They are always treated secondarily. The cases are delayed further in case of voluntary retirement of an employee.

17. Supervisory cadres of various departments is most important and considered as the back bone, playing a vital role in the smooth operation of Indian Railways thereby ensuring safety of the entire Railway system. Below supervisory cadre your job is confined/limited, but a supervisor has to perform multiple tasks like planning of material, manpower management, problem solving etc.
18. As Indian railways is going through the process of technological upgradation and to ensure that transition is seamless for attracting quality manpower, sufficient avenue of promotions has to be ensured which do not exist as of now. The technological upgradation Indian Railways is stressing for which future manpower requirements are increasingly likely to be more of skilled and supervisory categories vis-a-vis relatively unskilled categories.
19. An employee loses his seniority in case of transfer to a different division or zone. He has to start from scratch. It discourages the employee to demand the transfer to his native place. He might have his own residential house in his native place, or there may be any other reason for demanding the transfer. The transfer policy needs to be revived.
20. Government staff works but inefficiently, owing to multiple reasons, one of them is poor training. Most of the Non AIS Govt. machinery is either poorly trained or not at all trained. Exclusively OTJ learning means. Without adequate training, one exclusively learn from Babu's and seniors who pass on the means, methods and mentality to new recruits and it becomes a vicious circle.
21. Every rule and DAR are framed in favour of officers. Officers have weaponized DAR against subordinates with an intention to control the staff. They are belittling every other employee.
22. It is seen through the study that the values in the department can be inculcated only after effective implementation by the superiors. Subordinate staff is ready to welcome the changes in the work environment only after their problems are solved. The discrimination between the staff should be reduced or rather removed. Equality will spread the values easily. The work environment will be positive only after enough strength of the staff and fund is infused in the system. Extra efforts are required on the part of superiors to handle the subordinates more skillfully. The relation between the superior and subordinates will improve to a large extent. Indian railways need to change from the social image to corporate image which will derive more revenue and funds for the effective functioning of the organisation.
23. No one is owed to the railway neither the officers nor the subordinates, no one has the feeling that we are working for some cause, and we are getting paid for making the commuters/goods reach their destiny.

"What are we going to achieve by handing the reins of the nation to Babus? Just as our Babus belong to the country, so do the Indian youth" - *PM Modi.*

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Indian Railway is always confused in establishing its image in society. It is caught between the identity of social organisation and commercial organisation. The mission of Indian Railways reflects the social or service institutional image of railways. It totally focuses on rendering the service to passengers by taking care of their safety and security. The commercial angle is missing and is not reflected anywhere through the mission and objectives of the organisation. It creates a particular impression in the minds of employees and society as well. Neither the staff nor the public bothers to consider it as a commercial profit-making organisation. The expectations of society rise, and they start considering railways as their property. It shakes the basic purpose of starting an organisation. Even though the ultimate aim of Indian Railways is serving the commuters, still the importance of profit-making cannot be ignored. It can serve society comfortably only when it has sufficient revenues in its treasure. The mission of Indian Railways should be revised with the inclusion of commercial objectives in it. Also, the mission and objectives should be always visible to not only employees but also to society as well. It should also become a part of training, where employees should be enlightened about the depth and scope of the mission. It will help to create a better image of railways. This will also bring a remarkable change in the behaviour of staff as well as passengers.

The shifting of roles from the traditional public transport system to commuters' friendly service provider system requires changes in the value system of railways. It requires a desired change in the mindset of operating staff, administrative staff and the public in general. The leadership at the top level has the administrative capability in bringing desirable reforms in railways. The constructive work culture does not remain a dream anymore if the concerned authorities decide firmly to change. Only recruiting more staff is not sufficient to face the increasing number of commuters. **Effective training and motivation at the lower level is a must. Effective and practical promotion and appraisal policies can raise the morale of the subordinate staff.** Better human resources and human relationship management play a crucial role in creating a healthy work culture.

Railways being the vast network, will take a little more time in implementing better ideas. These ideas are required to be digested by the huge number of human resources working in this giant organisation. Advanced technology is the area where the railway staff has to adapt themselves. The adequate inflow of funds and innovation are the areas where the higher authorities need to improve. Special emphasis should be given to cleanliness track upgradation and asset maintenance. This is the high time and right time to act. Various administrative aspects are analysed and recommendations which will lead to constructive work culture in Indian Railways are…

General Suggestions:

1. **Clerks and Peons system of administration has to go off**. As rightly said by E. Sreedharan sir " I have learnt my lessons from the Indian Railways to not duplicate their work culture".
2. Railways have the potential of reviving the animal spirits of the economy. Potential to create world-class MRO (Maintenance Repair and Overhaul) companies. Already the PPP models are being implemented in production units, outsourcing of maintenance activities (privatization is not new in railways). An MOU has been signed between Alstom & Indian Railway for delivery of locos.
3. The army of workforce, railway has is phenomenal, better utilization of their professional skills, and at the same time enhancing their skills set is important. R & D, academics and industrial linkage is the key. Railways have the potential to bridge the gap. 'Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana' to impart training skills to the youth in various trades to bring qualitative improvement, is good initiative.
4. The grievance is any discontent or dissatisfaction with regard to any aspect of the organisation. It is initially in the form of a complaint but when the complaint remains unattended and the employee concerned feels a sense of injustice, that dissatisfaction grows and takes the form of grievance. Grievances in railways can be said to exist because of formal and long bureaucratic procedures between superiors and subordinates. Break the organizational rigidity.
5. It is always advisable to do counseling by the immediate superior, as it improves the bond between superior and subordinate. Generally any employee has most of the complaints against his immediate superior, hence a healthy discussion between them solves most of the problems.
6. 'National monetization policy' of assets monetization already in pipelines. The government is sitting on a large pile of Non-performing assets. The railway has a huge potential to unlock most of its NPAs and monetize its assets through the NMP (Have to wait and watch). The NMP is already under implementation through IRSDC, IRLDC. Business development units (BDUs) at Divisional and Zonal levels are performing well.
7. It is the post downsizing and non-recruitment policy of Indian railways, affecting work culture. This in turn increases the burden on the existing employees, which in turn results in additional workload. It is one of the reasons for dissatisfaction among employees. Indian Railways go for restructuring every ten years. The effect of restructuring and downsizing has together made a serious impact on the number of employees in each department. Moreover, automation and computerization have reduced this number further. The outsourcing of many activities in different departments has left the available vacant posts totally meaningless.
8. The deep-rooted problems like corruption, misuse of funds, absenteeism should be eradicated. Indian Railways need transformational leadership to bring innovation.

9. Even though the technology is spreading its hand rapidly, the railway is still running behind the time. The reason given by the railway authorities is the shortage of funds. There are still many departments where computers have not reached. The work of many employees can be done by one computer. The railway is unnecessarily wasting its financial resources on the compensation of its excess staff. The number of computers should be increased, and simultaneously the staff should be trained to use these machines.
10. There are suggestion boxes on many railway stations, but not on all. This concept of a suggestion box can be implemented for employees as well. They have many innovative and constructive ideas in their mind which may be helpful for the working of the department. Any individual can express himself freely through writing on papers rather than talking in front of a senior. The grudges and complaints of employees can be entertained, if valid through this concept. The suggestions given by the public can be useful. This idea is one of the means of developing employee loyalty and closeness towards the organisation. People feel a sense of ownership and belongingness.
11. The problem of corruption is deep-rooted in Indian Railways. It starts at the recruitment stage in the form of accepting bribes for the selection of a candidate. There are many cases reported of bribes for promotion in the personnel department. Inflating the bills and tampering with purchases of materials in the stores' department is not new. The engineering department is not behind in these activities. Deals with contractors, price corrections, false tenders, fixation of bids are the types of corruption in the engineering department. This disease is spread from higher levels to lower levels. Even though the Recruitment Board is sincerely attempting to make the recruitment procedure transparent, the opportunists search for some loopholes in it and benefit themselves. Strict checks and surprise visits by vigilance departments should be done to control such activities. Ethical values should be a part of officers' training.
12. Railways should be considered a part of society. Citizens have the wrong notion in their minds about ownership of railways. They consider railways as their private property and do not respect them. The working of railways will not improve unless commuters stop behaving irresponsibly.
13. The recognized unions are said to be working for the welfare of employees. Their role should be more constructive and the execution of work should be clearly seen. Employees do not have a very positive image of unions in their minds. They remain neutral when it comes to membership in the union. The relations between union members and management should not be stressful. The overall working of unions should be more effective and impressive. It will create trust and faith in the minds of employees as well as management. The political interference in unions should be completely removed.

14. Training facilities need reforms. Cleaning up the training institutes and upgrading standards, breaking feudalism within, is the key. The training institutes lack skillful teachers. We have to train employees on how to work in a PPP environment, as most of the non-core activities are getting outsourced (BPO's).
15. The organisational restructuring should be impartial. It is observed that only certain 'targeted' departments only have to surrender their posts. The manpower strength of other departments remains untouched. Some of the officers are selfish enough to show their efficiency by cutting staff strength. This benefits them in future in terms of promotion and rewards. Manpower planning should be carefully handled by the Railway Board.
16. The policy decisions by Railway Boards related to recruitment and selection should be transparent. The performance appraisal process should be modernized according to recent work patterns.
17. After getting SAG grade, officers should not be posted at the same place, from where they worked for a long in lower grades/their parent zone. They should be posted at a different zone, then only they can bring in best practices being followed by other zonal railways. This rule is getting flaunted.
18. For generalized working posts like ticket collectors, goods guards, store managers, commercial staff, clerks, office staff, ministerial staff, etc., (NTPC posts) for which computer knowledge is enough which doesn't require any technical expertise, stop/limit direct recruitment from the open market. Fill those posts through GDCE or with the medical de-categorized persons or with the persons who are unfit for the open line.
19. The railway engineers known as backbone of Indian Railways. The railways can skill up the railway engineers and transform them into world-class engineers, but a bunch of the officers are given the best training. (they know the railway trade very well, they know all the rules and loopholes).
20. The administration is becoming more dynamic with the use of the latest technology, there will be some hiccups in this transformational phase. Once everything is done, technology takes its position, we can run the system in autopilot mode.
21. More zones and divisions are required for the effective administration of railways. The number of zones today is seventeen. It should be increased so as to reduce the burden on the existing zones. Also, the number of divisions should be increased in each zone. It will decentralize the work and authority as well. The functioning will become more smooth and transparent.
22. The most confusing thing about railways is their long list of designations. It is a form of 'tall' organisation in terms of levels of authority, and each level has numerous designations. The effectiveness of a decision diminishes as it reaches the lowest authority. The organisational restructuring should be supported by internal restructuring as well. The authority levels should be merged together to become more effective. Decentralization of authority should be practised. More

and more decisions and responsibilities should be given to subordinates. The freedom to decide their way of working is equally important. Protocols are highly followed in railway departments. A lot of time is wasted on it and the intensity of work decreases. These protocols should be brought to a minimum possible extent.

23. Gazetted officers of railways are still enjoying the legacy and royal treatment of the British era. Times have changed, but the impact of the British is still the same. There is a provision of residence Bungalow peon for the gazetted officers. It increases the financial burden. These officers are also served royally on their duty. The maintenance of their offices and office staff becomes a costly affair for railways. A lot of money can be saved on such unproductive expenditures. Further, there is a trend to absorb these class D staff in railway administrative offices. This practice is unethical. Still, the existing system is only based on British Raj even after 75 yrs of independence.
24. Shortage of funds is the most discussed issue in Indian Railways. Departments have to suffer financially due to the limited allocation of funds. The Railway Ministry disburses fewer funds at zonal and divisional levels to recover the loss. The best alternative to compensate for the loss is increasing fares of the train journey. There is no other medium as cheap as railways. People do not understand its worth and wrongly utilize these services. The rise in fares of tickets as well as waiting rooms will make them realize the importance of railways. The typical Indian mentality is people value expensive things as they have paid higher. The fines and punishments should be stringent and strictly followed.
25. The private sector regulations should be made applicable to railways. The recruitment, promotions should be exclusively performance-based. The appraisals should be critical. The rise in salaries should not be a yearly affair. Unnecessary welfare facilities like seasonal passes, housing facilities should be cancelled. The atmosphere in the departments should be more competitive than lethargic. The employees should be kept on their toes to achieve the targets and should not be granted any concessions. Training should be rigorous and results should be strictly evaluated. These transformations can build the image of Indian Railways as efficient and competitive.

Suggestions related to Railway Officers

The role of participative management is vital in the case of railway officers. It is observed by the researcher that the Railway Ministry and Railway Board convey their policy decisions to the zonal managers and he, in turn, passes them on to the divisional officers. The duty of divisional officers is the mere implementation of these decisions. The departmental officers are pressurized by the divisional manager to achieve the targets. There is no participation of these officers in policy decisions. Railways should inculcate this practice of participative management, which will make their policy decisions more

realistic. The actual problems and practical difficulties faced by the departmental officers can be discussed face to face and can be considered while finalizing these decisions. There will be a sense of recognition and ownership in the minds of officers. Their interest and enthusiasm for work will increase, and they will work wholeheartedly for achieving the organisational goals.

1. The vacant posts in each railway department have become a headache for the concerned officer. Every year, one per cent of the total number of posts has to be surrendered compulsorily due to the internal restructuring policy of railways. As a result of this, a lot of posts have lapsed and there is a shortage of staff in the department. The burden of workload does not reduce in equal proportion. In fact, it goes on increasing every year due to the rising expectations of policy-makers. This creates an additional burden on the existing employees**. The officers are compelled to set high targets, which are generally beyond the reach of the present employees.** This disturbs the whole situation and the superior-subordinate relations get stretched. Setting achievable targets by explaining the whole situation to the employees can be one solution to such problems. The superiors and subordinates should meet quite often so that there will be an open conversation between them and fewer chances of misunderstandings about each other. **Officers shouldn't take their subordinates for granted.**
2. Departments in Indian railways are not working in cooperation, but there is unhealthy competition amongst them. Every department is trying to prove itself as the best performing department. It is creating a serious negative impact on the overall functioning of Indian railways. The major reason behind this competition is the shortage of funds. Funds are allocated on the basis of the performance of the departments. The better the performance, the higher the allocation will be. **The officers aspiring for promotion are the main culprits in it. They exploit the subordinates for achieving the departmental targets and prove themselves efficient in front of their seniors.** The recommendation of general managers for promotion plays a very important role. This competition should be transformed into cooperation. The performance of the division matters more than the individual department.
3. Top management of railways is keenly interested in the creation of constructive work culture in the organisation. What is lacking is the support of the officials. There are some administrative officers indulging in corruption, bribery, scams which spoil the image of the Railway Ministry. Many of the ministers and higher-level officers had to leave their chairs due to such blames. Orientation of the officials should be done through managerial development programs so that they will be united in the achievement of the organisational goals.
4. There will be differences in the perception of human resource aspects by officers and by subordinates. Officers feel that employees should be given proper pay and welfare facilities, and

they will be happy. But unfortunately, the reality is different. According to a survey by the researcher, the employees have given preference to considerate superiors and better working conditions. This gap between the perceptions should be properly understood and officers should change their behaviour and attitude towards their subordinates accordingly.

5. The leadership style of railway officers should be more constructive. It should reflect the enthusiasm for achievement of the set targets. Rather than strict follow up of rules and regulations, they should emphasize more on the result-oriented performance of the departments. Access to superiors should be easy. Superior officers should be more approachable. The working style of officers demands change. It should be more objective and result-oriented than subjective and focused on specific individuals only. Favouritism should be avoided by the officers.
6. The work-related values can be inculcated by the officers in their department if they really strive hard towards it. Eradication of corruption is most important. Transparency in the work can change the mindset of employees, and they will become more open towards management.
7. The span of control of each superior should be reduced to have proper control and effective administration. Due to a large number of staff under the supervision of one officer, the control becomes difficult, and the superior loses his hold on the staff. Also, the communication channel becomes ineffective. The original message doesn't reach the final level of hierarchy, and it results in something else than the original orders.
8. The independent in charge officer/supervisors who are to be available in service 24×7. Getting leave is becoming difficult for them, they are feeling that they are sacrificing their lives to the railways and venting their frustration on subordinates. Officers/Supervisors have to be trained on how to handle their ego, arrogance & stress.
9. Officers are the brain of the organization. You are paid for your intelligence, you are the one who has to plan for the smooth running of the department. Subordinates are the aiding arms. It is your responsibility to make better/ the best use of them. All the body parts will function madly if the head doesn't control their movement.
10. The communication between the senior departmental officers and the running staff should be constructive. Stop using technical background staff who are to be used in safety category jobs for the clerical jobs.
11. The gray area, the place between black and white- that's the place where life happens. Departmental Heads has to know how to 'Manage the Gray Areas'. Essential for leading people, projects & Organizations (out of the box thinking). Government organizations doesn't allow to do so.
12. I will tell you one thing that I have learned in life, that nobody is going to remember what position you hold, how you look, or how corrupt you are, but they will remember how you treated them.

And that is the biggest lesson in life, it's how you treat people that's the legacy you leave behind. So treat people with kindness.

Suggestions related to Subordinate Staff

1. Downsizing of the departments in divisions is continuously increasing pressure on the present employees. It may be possible to manage with the available strength in personnel or account departments, but technical departments, cannot manage with the reduced staff strength. The heavy technical work requires a large number of employees. Cost-cutting and restructuring should be restricted to non-technical departments only.
2. The researcher observed the bad working conditions of the class D staff working in tracks. Repair and maintenance work done by them demands working in tracks or on railway stations for long working hours and in all seasonal conditions. The basic facilities like uniforms, shoes and safety equipment are absent. The reason stated is the shortage of funds. This category of staff does not have any motivation for work. They easily get addicted to bad habits due to heavy work. This in turn affects their families.
3. Most of the class D staff is engaged in unproductive work in different departments. The young people in this category are highly qualified. Some are even postgraduates. Their knowledge and strength can be utilized for meaningful work in the department. It will also help to reduce the additional burden on the existing staff due to shortage.
4. It is found that employees take undue advantage of the liberal attitude of their seniors. They are not punctual and sincere in their work. Finally, all employees receive the same treatment and compensation. The sincere and honest employees cannot tolerate this and there are disputes in the department. Every employee should be honest about his duties and responsibilities.
5. The subordinate staff should be actively involved in policy framing and decision-making activities. Participative management should be practically implemented. This subordinate staff is going to be senior staff in a few years. They should get trained for such activities. This system will inculcate good work-related values in them.
6. The subordinate staff should work in teams rather than individually. Teamwork will reduce the communication gap between the employees. The interdependency of the staff will bring them closer. It will also improve their relations with each other. The nature of a job in any railway department is independent rather than interdependent. This does not create a bond between the employees in terms of work. This will also provide a solution to the shortage of staff problem. When people will understand each other’s job, it will be easier to handle the additional load of work. The job profile of employees should be flexible.

7. The designations of subordinate staff should be curtailed. Various types of jobs should be brought under one general title for operational efficiency. The existing designations unnecessarily increase the administrative work and time and energy is wasted in it. Also, the income slabs of group C and group D staff should be more generalized. It will bring uniformity in working.

These suggestions will definitely help to improve the working conditions, work environment and overall work culture in different departments. The establishment of a revised value system will provide fresh insight to the railway staff, which in turn will reflect into the improved work culture. Recommendations are for bringing reforms in the working style of subordinates and officers and transformation of work culture.

Shri Bibek Debroy Committee Report Findings and Recommendations:

For an elaborate and detailed understanding/comprehension, please go through the Bibek Debroy report. Only a gist of the report is presented below,

1. As pointed out by many previous Committees, over the years the IR organization has grown into an '**overly centralized and tall hierarchical organisation'.** The feeling of 'departmentalism' adversely affects the working culture in the IR and has resulted in actions and decisions based on narrow departmental goals instead of on organizational objectives or benefits.
2. It is often reiterated that the IR may end up as a burden on national economy, which makes it necessary to relook and redefine the role of IR with the changing times. One of the significant issues is that many decisions on IR — like increase in fare, introduction of new trains, and provision of halts and establishment of new projects — are taken on the basis of other than commercial considerations. As commercial accounting principles too are not in use on the IR, the costs and the returns from such investments are also not easy to assess. The efforts for engaging State Governments and other interested parties for sharing the burden of un-remunerative projects have been few and far between.
3. It is increasingly accepted that IR is no longer a monopoly and faces stiff competition from the road sector. The cross-subsidisation of low passenger fares by artificially high freight rates has led to a shift in favour of road transport, for both freight and short distance passenger traffic. It needs to be recognised that most passengers are willing to pay higher fares, albeit only if accompanied by enhanced services.
4. The IR executes its projects through two types of agencies. The first type is the zonal project organisation and the other is the project organisations — like CORE — reporting directly to the Railway Board. The zonal organisations are very large and unwieldy and lack the cutting edge for timely execution of projects. To overcome the resulting time and cost overruns which plague in-

house project execution, this Committee recommends bringing all the zonal construction organisations under the umbrella of one or more PSUs such as RVNL, RITES, IRCON etc.

5. In the IR, many works of similar nature, like cleaning of trains and stations, IT initiatives etc. are performed in parallel by multiple agencies resulting in suboptimal performance. There is a need to integrate and synergise such functions to accomplish comprehensive results. Invariably there is also a large amount of duplication and redundancy that has built up over the decades in railways.
6. At present, the station managers (superintendents under the earlier nomenclature) too have limited powers, other than powers over commercial operations. This Committee recommends that all A1 and A type stations should be manned by gazetted officers as station managers. In the Junior and senior timescale, these posts will have to be re-designated as general posts. Supervisors and other staff who work in the stations will report to their departmental divisional officers only through the station manager. (Criteria for categorisation of stations have been revised w.e.f. November, 2017. As per the new categorization, both number of footfalls and passenger earnings of stations have been taken into account for categorization of stations. The stations have been clubbed into 3 groups i.e., Non-suburban (NSG), Suburban (SG) and Halt (HG)). In the stations with higher revenue generation, the Station Manager has to be given full powers in providing/improving amenities and maintenance of the station.
7. This Committee feels that the powers of the GM have been constricted over the years by additions and qualifications to the excluded list — mostly with the objective of budgetary control — which severely hampers decision-making. The head of the Zone (GM) must be fully empowered to take all necessary decisions without reference to the Railway Board within the framework of policies. This Committee recommends that within the revenue budget financial outlay, the Zonal Railways should have full powers for expenditure, re- appropriation and sanctions, subject to it meeting its proportionate earning target. This would make each Zonal Railway accountable for its transport output and profitability.
8. Once the Zones are made autonomous, the Railway Board will have little role to play in their day-to-day functioning and can become like a corporate board for IR — policy being determined by the Ministry of Railways and competition ensured by the RRAI. This Committee strongly recommends for an independent regulator to be established i.e., Railway Regulatory Authority of India ((RRAI), with a separate budget and to be independent of the Ministry of Railways. The RRAI will have the powers and objectives of economic regulation, including, wherever necessary, tariff regulation; safety regulation; fair access regulation, including access to railway infrastructure for private operators; service standard regulation; licensing and enhancing competition; and setting technical

standards. It will possess quasi-judicial powers, with appointment and removal of Members distanced from the Ministry of Railways.

9. Various activities and jobs in IR are specialized, and currently organized into departments along functional lines. These departments do not possess the customer/business orientation that is normally associated with a commercial organization. Furthermore, as pointed out by many previous committees, over the years the IR organization has become overly centralized and hierarchical and one of the crucial issues has been the 'departmentalism' that adversely affects the working culture in the IR. The sense of departmentalism has mounted into pursuing narrow departmental goals which has snapped the spirit of teamwork and this has further snowballed into lack of transparent and fair policies, competition amongst departments in allocation of resources and investment decisions and suboptimal decision-making. It has also further spiralled the existing railway organization structure into inward looking and non-customer oriented, each department having different priorities and measures, which focus on departmental instead of organizational objectives or benefits.
10. One of the causes of departmentalism is the multiplicity of different channels of entry into the IR. After discussions with various stakeholders, this Committee has noted that the main contributor of departmental tendency is the silo structure of the multifarious Group A services. This Committee strongly recommends reduction in the number of Group-A services in IR, and also suggests two options for this. One option is the amalgamation of all existing services into a single unified Railways Service. The second option that this Committee suggests is that IR should consolidate and merge the existing eight organised Group 'A' services, preferably into two services i.e., the Indian Railway Technical Service (IRTechS) comprising the existing five technical services (IRSE,IRSSE, IRSEE, IRSME and IRSS) and the Indian Railway Logistics Service (IRLogS) comprising the three non-technical services (IRAS, IRPS AND IRTS). The common merged cadre/services refer to their merging into optimal number of logical groupings (cadres/services) that minimize dissonance and maximize synergies and organizational efficiency. We recommend that necessary modalities for making these changes be initiated by Railways in consultation with DoP&T and UPSC. We do recognise that a workable methodology to ensure positioning of Group 'A' officers with appropriate qualifications/competencies against various posts will be required. Therefore, to break down the silos, while the one-service and two-service options are both feasible options for IR, this Committee expresses its preference for the two-service options.
11. In case of the promotion of Group 'B' officers to the Group 'A' the existing procedure involving approval of UPSC should be continued, the only difference being that instead of the different seniority lists that exist currently for the different services, a common seniority lists of Group 'B'

officers will be drawn up and used for the new service, or services as the case maybe. IR should work out the details for this. In the event a Group 'B' officer inducted into Group 'A' has a relatively shorter residual service left, deployment could be assigned to him in the functional area of his specialization only.

12. This Committee underlines the importance of planned job rotation — for developing competencies in relevant areas — and to training, at appropriate stages.
13. This Committee is of the view that Railways need to take appropriate action to restore the status associated with functioning of senior supervisors. With a view to ensuring a high level of competence and professionalism, Railways should consider a system where career progression is linked to successfully competing in rather rigorous qualifying examinations. Appropriate training interventions and suitable empowerment through delegation of powers, at least at Apex Group 'C' levels, would go a long way in imparting dignity to them for better contributions and higher motivation.
14. For all these changes to be effective, this Committee strongly feels that a performance assessment system, driven by enhanced objectivity and transparency, needs to be rolled out and implemented in IR. This should equip IR with an ability to not only rationally differentiate the performance, capability and aptitude of its employees, but also to provide inputs for achieving a better fit between responsibilities assigned to an employee and his/her capabilities, and a means for identifying and strengthening improvement in areas of weaknesses detected in an employee.
15. To address the issues brought out above, this Committee builds its recommendations on three pillars, namely i) commercial accounting; ii) changes in HR, and; iii) an independent regulator.
16. This Committee recommends establishment of a responsive and transparent accounting and costing system as the first stepping-stone to a commercially viable Railway system. For implementation of the accounting reforms, a clear roadmap may be drawn with time frames for constituent activities, which needs to be monitored and guided at the top level.
17. This Committee acknowledges that the restructuring of IR is an onerous task and thus has recommended a timeline of five year for the three building blocks: i.e., transition to commercial accounting; effecting HR changes, and; the setting up of an independent regulator.
18. This Committee acknowledges that the restructuring of IR will be a humongous task, ushering a large scope of proposed changes. Thus, to implement the recommendations this committee suggests that the responsibility should vest in the Minister of Railways alone, with an appropriate reporting to PMO.

IRMS CHALLENGES

Will the unification of railway management services pay off?

Successful restructuring of railways' top management is predicated on eliminating glaring anomalies. Restructuring of railways' top management challenges officers to think big and anew. With alarm bells ringing for the Railways, the government has signaled that it is prepared to grasp the nettle. It aims at integrating the Railways' existing eight Group 'A' services into the Indian Railways Management Service (IRMS), and downsizing the Railway Board from nine members to five (including Chairman), re-designating them on a functional basis, instead of departments as done so far. Reforms and restructuring as per operational needs has to be an ongoing exercise to keep the organization efficient, responsive and financially viable. These measures, no doubt necessary, aren't enough. The need for the Railways today is to virtually re-invent itself. As rapidly evolving business ethos and technological developments generate a new momentum, the Railways must perforce be agile and alert, widening its vision from being just in the rail transport business to becoming an integrated, intermodal logistics operator. To become forward-looking, technologically-dynamic, customer-friendly, and cost-effective, it should enlist, on a need basis, external agencies/institutes, specialists and professionals, for example, for R&D and IT, shed off-line activities, and shed its accumulated layers. Like its decision to corporatise its production units a call on consolidating the loco & wagon manufacturing units under a single central public sector enterprises (much belated), it should do this for its construction wings next.

Any change triggers varying reactions. Not unexpectedly, many apprehensions about the IRMS have been voiced. The stated rationale for the restructuring—"departmentalism" decried as "silos sapping the Railways' energy and vitality'—has been questioned by some veterans, but it is difficult to believe that the Railways Board has been a well-knit, cohesive corporate body. Parochial considerations often overcome organisational well-being. Some departments, particularly, vie to inflate the numbers to secure senior positions. Departments engaged in executing projects have kept widening their bases by subterfuges such as "work charged" posts which, as the Bibek Debroy Committee found, are continued for years after the projects are completed, with the connivance of Finance, which too ekes out its share from the pie.

In 1947, the Railway Board had a Chief Commissioner (later called President; in 1951, re-designated Chairman), a Financial Commissioner, and three Members (Transportation, Staff, Engineering). Well after a Member Mechanical was added in 1954, another Member Electrical joined in 1987. Soon, clamour set in for the remaining two cadres (Signalling and Stores) also to have their representation on the Board. Realising the impact of the spreading departmentalism virus in the system, in 2015, the government

initiated a halfway measure to merge two verticals of Electrical and Mechanical branches on 'functional lines', designating the Member Mechanical as Member Rolling Stock, and Member Electrical as Member Traction. But, strangely, it was only just some months ago that the Railway Board was expanded to make it a nine-member body, with two new members, one for Signalling, and the second for Stores, no doubt exacerbating the departmentalism virus.

In the meanwhile, since the 1980s, time-tested precepts for selection of general managers and board members for the Railways have been altered, thereby eroding the system's effectiveness. Like the army filling senior 'command' posts mostly from among those from the fighting 'arms', posts of zonal general managers were required to be manned only by officers exposed to the rigours of action in the field. Board members were invariably from among general managers from zones (termed 'Open Line'), not from the production units or projects. Instead of first devising a mechanism for selection of genuinely suitable officers with requisite experience, from different disciplines, training and exposing them to situations that trained them to competently shoulder divisional and zonal command posts, thoughtlessly, doors were thrown open for all; even those confined to 'back-office' desks for most of their career.

Some commentators have observed, "The Augean stables' strategy of unifying cadres …may create more problems than it can solve". Successful transition will depend on devising an enduring format for future recruitment, and, above all, fair and equitable readjustment of existing 8,400 Group 'A' officers to have their legitimate career progression ensured, consistent with optimal organisational interest. Some critics of the new policy have ascribed prevalent "inequitable career progression across departments" to "inadequate recruitment planning for Group 'A' officers", whereas a major cause is the age differential of recruits through Civil Services exam vis-à-vis those from engineering stream, and Special Class Apprentices joining as mechanical engineers.

There is little clarity on the methodology for recruitment for the unified IRMS. Functionally, there can be no escape from departments; both technical and non-technical specialisations are needed for a complex, multidisciplinary rail industry. Three streams for specialised railway requirements may well serve the purpose: (i) a non-technical segment to cater for operation and business development, HR, and finance; (ii) civil and signal engineers for infrastructure; and (iii) electrical and mechanical engineers for rolling stock or mobile assets. Stores or material management may well be made a part of Finance. With a view to creating a cohesive and integrated 'cadre', the Railways may look at inducting all its IRMS Group 'A' managers from amongst technical/engineering graduates, who, during training, may be additionally exposed to transport economics and business management. The template that the army provides for selection, training, and assignment of officers to different 'arms', analogous to the Railways disciplines, may be a good guide. For future recruitment, there may be no major hurdle to abide by the underlying spirit of IRMS. The complex issue of equitably adjusting the existing officers necessitates an empathetic

mechanism. Those unwilling to opt for merger with IRMS must be allowed to continue, seeking their prospects in their specialised cadres, while all others opting for merger be prepared for a fresh selection by UPSC, necessarily done on the basis of genuine suitability, for general management posts. Age and seniority based on rank in UPSC test over 30 years back alone cannot be a fair measure of suitability. During the initial period of railway construction and expansion, officer cadres were mainly manned by British engineers holding diplomas or degrees, or those from the Royal Engineers, while recruits for operational and commercial jobs, not drawn from amongst university men, remained disadvantaged for manning higher management posts. How can any organisation allow such glaring anomalies as encountered? For example, the cadre engaged in railways' core business has just one of the 27 posts of general manager? Such lopsidedness in senior managerial posts is baffling: Transport operation and marketing (IRTS) has been given only 1.6% of the GM posts compared to 20% for Mechanical (IRSME), 10% for Electrical (IRSEE), and around 8% each for Signals (IRSSE), Civil (IRSE), and Stores (IRSS)!
The Railways' top management posts must perforce be manned only by those who are exposed to the vagaries of the market and rigours of operations in the field. Those others who provide vital support for the Railways' primary business would naturally be enabled to rise in their specialised domains. That is how the Tandon Committee on Organisational Structure & Management Ethos of Indian Railways (1994) advised for suitable selection of officers with "needed combination of managerial ability and knowledge" for senior general management positions, while others "would seek their advancement in the areas of their broad specialisations rising up to positions of … Director General".

Thanks to periodical cadre restructuring, a large number of posts have been devalued, and additional tiers inserted, like those of AGM, ADRM, etc. It erodes the Railways' effectiveness. The Bibek Debroy Committee found that "IR's efficiency was better with 9 zones than with 16". It would be prudent to holistically restructure the organisation, including to streamline the traditional four-tiered organisation into a three-tiered system, as Chinese Railways did in 2005, by abolishing its 44 sub-regional entities—equivalent of IR's 68 Divisions. Concomitantly, large station complexes, major freight centres, maintenance depots and installations would need to be endowed with empowered local area managers.

The Railways need to institutionalise the selection for the general management pool. It may afford an opportunity to officers from all disciplines to be considered, say, on completion of 15 years of service, selection done only by an external agency, preferably by the UPSC. A rigorous selection process together with training will help an enduring management cadre to evolve, for appointment as empowered local area managers at large stations, workshops and depots, also in Planning, Vigilance, Public Relations, and, of course, following regular specialised courses, as Divisional and Zonal heads. No organisation or country can afford to get stuck in time, history or geography. Given right leadership, the nation's crown jewel, the Railways, will bounce back and deliver. Its management needs to embrace creative destruction, not just

preserve the past. Indian Railways is reshaping/remolding itself for the better good, there are some hiccups here and there which are to be corrected in course of time. Hope this new IRMS system doesn't create 'British **Feudalistic minded- Elite Demigods**'. If the training was given in the present style of bureaucratic & princely, then there won't be any change. Please make them **normal human beings**. Don't make IRMS as an 'old wine in a new bottle' type of service. Administrative offices should see their role as "enablers of governance" rather than as "deliverers of good government". The focus should be on practicality, Passion and performance. The new IRMS system should stand the test of time. Change is only constant, IRMS should be prepared to face all the challenges. Hope this new IRMS will break all the bottlenecks. Still a long way to go, I think IRMS is the first step in the right direction (future has to decide on it).

Return of investment is not taken into consideration for investing on infrastructure in Indian railways. Focusing on spending more capital on infrastructure & improving amenities and neglecting returns (commercial viabilities) will be '***Hara-kiri***' for the railways in future. With more and more private players coming in, officers are not able to handle the legal arbitrations/disputes arising out of legal contract agreements. This is creating a bad image of the railways in the public platforms.

Our focus should be on jobs, jobs & jobs because a social crisis is erupting across the country (Covid-19 has worsened/triggered it more) and we need to create more and more blue-collar jobs, social unrest will prevail if it is not addressed quickly. Railways has the potential of creating more and more jobs directly or indirectly. Revitalising the public system, honesty, transparency, commitment, vigilance, self-regulation should be the key features for the country and society. One key feature of the economy today is the increasing dependence of the formal sector on contract labourers to ensure profitability by reducing cost of production and bypassing trade union issues. However, there are several pitfalls related to inferior working conditions, project delays, legal tangles, talent shortage and severe compromises on safety and security of workers. The management is thinking of short term benefits. They are creating work practices that are not sustainable. Make policies creating best work environment, sticking to the best practices of the world with a healthy competition, where efficiency is assured and it is win-win for both parties.

Internal departmental tussles within the railways i.e departmentalism and the narrow mentality imprisoned in their respective caves are responsible for the current plight of the railways. Unless the recommendations based on caste, religion in political interference, postings, transfers are strictly curbed, then merely changing the name is not going to save the railways. As the decision has already been taken to recruit IRMS through civil services examination, and the modus of operandi of IRMS is not yet disclosed. As the working modalities are yet to be known, engaging the present serving officers directly into IRMS without any skill test will be suicidal for the railways. There has to be a separate exam to check their competence/eligibility to engage them into IRMS. With digitalization more and more centralization of decision making, because top bosses doesn't believe in lower and medieval officers (GM doesn't believe

in AGM, DRM doesn't believe in his ADRM, and goes on…). The role and position of lower & medieval management are to be rationalized. The Indian bureaucracy is characterized by a strong emphasis on bureaucracy, protocol, and hierarchy, with a system of checks and balances in place to ensure that power is distributed fairly and responsibly. Why so hurry in issuing gazette notification for IRMS exam and cancelling the same, first sort out the departmental issue in railways, prune down irrelevant administrative hierarchies. Debate on specialist and generalist is a never ending topic but to run railways safely definitely technical background i.e specialists are necessary.

Suspensions and transfers

Whenever a major accident occurs due to lapses on the part of railway employees, such employees are suspended or removed from service for their lapses. However, a GM of that zone is sent on leave or DRM of that division is usually transferred. According to IR establishment rules transfer of an employee is not a punishment. Obviously, such a transfer is done only to show the public that action has been taken, though it just ensures that the incumbent is taken away from the firing line. This means that officials responsible for getting the work done from frontline staff have all powers according to their position in the hierarchy but no accountability.

But at the end, it is the team & field staff who does the actual job. Giving instructions is easy but converting into reality is the tough task which is done by the team. Railway job cannot be done by an individual it requires team work, so cultivate team spirit among employees.

My overall experience in the Indian railways

1. Very poor man power management.
2. Professionalism is a joke in railways.
3. Field learning is good.
4. Management is not very concerned.
5. Working Culture is of colonial era.
6. The hardest part is the lack of motivation among employees.
7. Age-Old policies, not designed for the digital world. For example, G&SR rules.
8. No new Innovation, Old conventional System.
9. Poor career progression.
10. As a technical supervisor your management skills are more important than your technical knowledge. Network building & social capital is very much important in railways.
11. Railways will definitely squeeze out your personal life, railway job demands your Omni presence.
12. I have a mixed opinion about the Railway officers.
13. My advice for railway aspirants, "Join here as the one who kicks not the one who gets kicked".

'You need power, only when you want to do something harmful, otherwise love is enough to get everything done'- Charlie Chaplin.

'The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace'-Mahatma Gandhi.

THE WAY FORWARD

Indian Railways is a mega transporter owing a vast network of fixed assets and a huge fleet of rolling assets. It also maintains and nurtures them for safety, productivity and economic efficiency. Hence, it has to remain bundled together with complex technical and professional competencies without cross functional friction. Railways being very complex in terms of network and also organizational structure, we can't formulate a binary solution. The Railway Ministry at the apex level to the group D staff at the lowest level is minutely observed. The organisation structure of the whole system and also of the department is observed. The researcher feels that an increase in the number of zones and divisions will improve the functioning of railways. Administrative levels in zones and divisions should be reduced. The long hierarchy of authority in the department nullifies the effect of the decision. The Senior Officer, Assistant Officer, Section Officer, Junior Section Officer, Chief Office Superintendent, Office Superintendent, Head Clerk, senior clerk, junior clerk, various levels of class D staff is the long hierarchy in the department.

This should be shortened. It will result into –

- Better communication
- Effective control and supervision
- Impressive motivation
- Effective leadership
- Better & Fast decision-making

The researcher also suggests reducing the span of control of each supervisor.

The Railway Ministry and Railway Board should decentralize the power and authority by creating additional zones and divisions. The existing zones and divisions are not sufficient to handle the increasing workload. The number of passengers for railway transport is increasing day by day. It stretches the capacity of the zones and additional burden on the divisions. Decentralisation will lead to the distribution of additional work, and hence the load on the Railway Board will be reduced. Delegation of authority to divisional management and departmental management will empower the staff and will also ensure active participation on their level. More the staff is empowered; more will be the willingness to work. Transparency in the work will lead to team spirit among employees. Government insecurity of losing control because of decentralization and wanting to control the organisation and vesting the authority in a few limited hands has created these demigods/arrogant officers.

The major obstacle in case of the organisational hierarchy of the railway department is ‘tall organisation’. A large number of designations at each level leads to delay in work and also effective decision-making. Communication and leadership can be effective only when the hierarchy is short. Tall

hierarchy is the barrier to developing healthy communication. The departmental authorities will be able to communicate impressively with their subordinates when they are easily accessible. The bureaucratic functioning creates lots of limitations on communication. The officers can be effective leaders when they have direct communication with their subordinates. Departmental officers need to develop a sense of unity for carrying out any task of their department. There should not be intra or interdepartmental competition. Rather, interdepartmental cooperation needs to be developed. The values nurtured in Indian Railways like integrity, unity, discipline etc. can be effectively inculcated in the departments when people work united even though they are from different departments. This spirit of cooperation and unity needed to be spread among the subordinates as well. They are the followers of their seniors. It will create a better organisational culture in Indian Railways. The feeling of commitment and integrity can be developed only when the organisation is run united with a sense of belongingness.

More zones and divisions are required for the effective administration of railways. The number of zones today is seventeen. It should be increased to reduce the burden on the existing zones. Also, the number of divisions should be increased in each zone. It will decentralize the work and authority as well. The functioning will become more smooth and transparent. Railway being a service sector, a larger organisation like railways needs to be decentralized for providing better services. Controlling the whole divisional departmental branch officers is becoming hard due to its overreach. Empower all field units with an unprecedented delegation of authority, empower them financially. Amalgamation of departments will create hiccups in the organisation, but it will be a short span.

"India is in Midst of a huge disruption/transformation"- Amitabh Kant. Indian Railways must welcome creative destruction to re-invent itself. Break the entire system, break all the rules, dismantle the British hierarchy, and reengineer it. The IR is reinventing itself, be it the bureaucratic obese structure or the **empire-building mindset**. India can't grow with the status quo, have to challenge the status quo.

Innovation, infrastructure and Inclusive growth have to be the 3 mantras for achieving sustainable goals. A restructured organisation should make it simple, agile and efficient, thereby giving it all the necessary tools and flexibilities to achieve future goals. The work culture of the organisation should be improved to such an extent that it should be reflected through the behaviour of each and every employee. The growth prospects of Indian railways are very high but possible only under transformational leadership which will bring extensive alterations in its working style. Reductions in bureaucracy levels to speed up the decision making process and 'minimise government'. Indian railways need transformational changes in their organisational structure, both physically and hierarchically. It will strengthen its position. It is good that the railways is focusing on operations and streamlining the organisation's functioning. Hope 'PM Gati Shakti'- push for multi model connectivity, will break all the bottle necks to smoothen the infrastructure

projects. National master plan for multi-model connectivity that aims to develop infrastructure to reduce logistics costs and boost the economy (breaking the bureaucratic silos).

The IR is in dire need of substantive structural reforms, to make it a leaner and more efficient organisation. Here are the reforms that are required to be taken up on a priority basis.

- One, separate policymaking, regulation and operations. The ministry (Railway Board) must confine itself to policy matters, independent regulator (s) should regulate, and railway zones, divisions and companies should operate, maintain and manage the railways.
- Two, mothball unwanted projects worth lakhs of crore rupees, sanctioned to suit political expediency. The IR needs a robust new architecture to fast-track project execution in a mission mode. The prevalent paradigm of construction through zonal railways has not delivered the desired results. Construction projects cannot be executed by following set of rules framed out of mistrust.
- Three, the IR should focus on core business and noncore activities such as running schools, colleges, and hospitals and the police force should be divested on a war footing.
- Four, all production units should be consolidated under unitary control to ensure better control, management, coordination and infusion of state-of-the-art technology.
- Five, the number of zones and divisions needs to be rationalised. The IR today is a complex cobweb of 19 zones and 70 divisions. It should be pruned to five zones and twenty divisions with a focus on operational ease, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Six, to jumpstart execution speed, efficiency and quality, the IR must merge zonal construction units with IRCON, RITES and RVNL.

There are many potential reforms that could be implemented in the Indian railways to improve the system and make it more efficient and effective. Some potential reforms that have been suggested include:

1. Investment in infrastructure: Improving the infrastructure of the railway system, including tracks, bridges, and stations, could help to increase capacity and reduce delays.
2. Modernization of technology: Updating and modernizing the technology used in the railways, such as signaling systems and rolling stock, could improve efficiency and safety.
3. Increased private sector involvement: Allowing private sector companies to invest in and operate certain aspects of the railway system, such as freight services, could bring in additional investment and expertise.
4. Improved financial management: This could involve measures such as better cost control and revenue generation, as well as more efficient use of resources.

5. Improved management: Implementing better management practices, such as reducing bureaucracy and increasing accountability, could help to improve the efficiency of the railways.
6. Greater focus on customer service: Improving customer service, such as by providing more information and assistance to travelers, could help to increase satisfaction with the railway system.
7. Improved safety: Implementing measures to improve safety, such as upgrading infrastructure and equipment and increasing staff training, could help to reduce accidents and incidents in railways.
8. Improved labor relationship: This could involve measures to address issues related to the treatment and working conditions of railway employees, such as better pay and benefits, and improved opportunities for training and advancement.
9. Increased integration with other modes of transportation: Improving connections with other modes of transportation, such as buses and metros, could make it easier for people to access the railway system and increase its overall usefulness.

My Suggestions:

1. Reduce Administrative tiers and restrict number of staff in administrative offices to the barest minimum. With technology in full swing, we must reduce administrative tiers to monitor divisional units and augment the strength at divisional level.
2. Stop seeking data/figures/information (‘irrelevant data’) from field units/divisional offices. At administrative offices same set of staff at all levels are doing same job and are seeking various information/data repeatedly from divisional units thus not allowing them to focus on regular job.
3. All the field unit/divisional employees’ strength must be 90% of the employee strength of railways.
4. Reduce jurisdiction of maintenance depots, reduce the span of control of each supervisor.
5. Delegate more power to divisions, reduce unnecessary intervention of HQs in divisional day to day functioning. Decentralize administration, breaking the hierarchies.
6. Streamline all the departments which are doing similar nature of duties into one unit, for better utilization of manpower and resources. Make railways right sized.

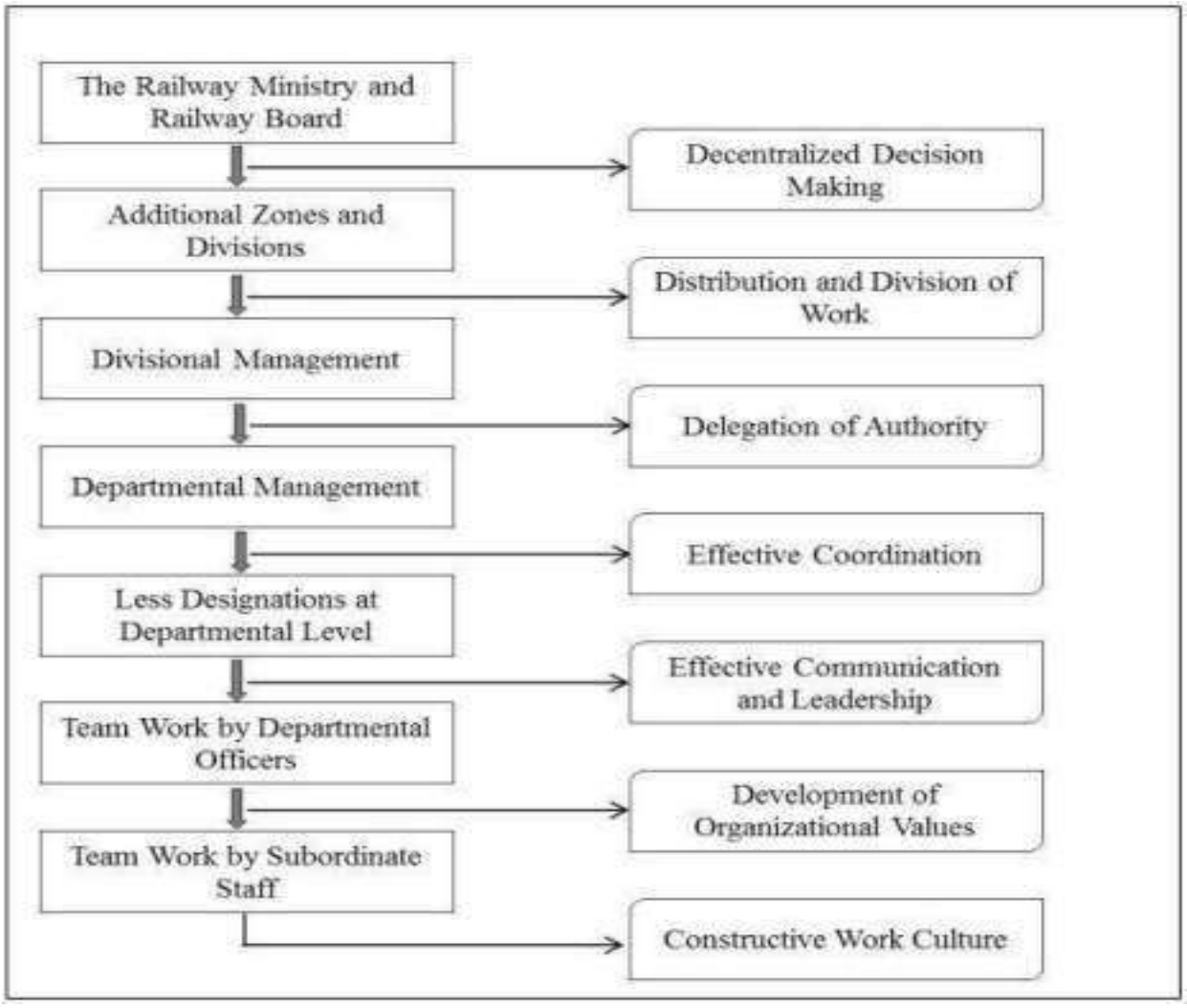
Five point reform template for Indian Railways.

1. Private entry to offer competition and better services.
2. Accounting reforms, to ensure costs and profitability numbers are transparent.
3. An independent regulator. Purine down tall hierarchy.
4. Devolution of decision making away from a centralised structure in Rail Bhawan.
5. HR reform, which means not only the structure of railway Board, but unification of services prospectively.

IR's growth is also stunted due to perennial bickering between departments. A classic case is the issue of Train -18 where the media is full of write-ups detailing the fight between the Mechanical and the Electrical departments. The fact is departmentalism has crippled IR. It is not just the one stated above but every department has a grouse against every other and the undercurrent of being loyal to one's department is so strong that employees forget that they work for IR and not their department or division or zone.

The model suggested for effective management is as follows:

Recommended Work Culture Model for Indian Railways



Pre-independence colonial-era customs followed by the British are still prevalent in IR which is hampering the behemoth's progress. The first and foremost is the three-tier organization structure of IR's operations adopted from the British – board level, zone level and division level. The board level does the policy-making and the division level is where the implementation happens. In this era of technology, instant communication and several tools to ease work, the existence of zones should be reviewed, justified and only if they are relevant, the existing structure should be left alone. Zones should not just be vehicles of providing promotions to their employees.

Whatever the reason, it raises an important point – why are higher-ups mostly detached from ground reality?. Still, the existing system is a perfect replica of the British Raj even after 75 years of independence. Let's unitedly fight together, to stop further spread of departmentalism & Elitism in Indian railways. Hope IRMS will enhance the quality of administration and efficient functioning of the Railway organisation. This is not the end, let IRMS be a new beginning. The future is in the hands of youth, let's take a decision, and let's change the fate of Indian railways. Let's make India a truly self-reliant nation-Atmanirbhar Bharat. Making the country and its citizens independent and self-reliant in all senses. The railways did more than linking India, they brought its people together, changing histories, forging destinies, and leaving a lasting legacy. Indian Railways, the arteries of our nation. From the bustling city stations to the quiest countryside stops, they connect us all. Traveling on train in India, is chaotic and fun. I may look very critical but we cannot be complacent. We have to do continuous improvement in all fields as there is nothing which cannot be improved. More important is the speed at which we do it to reap the benefits.

"Without ending departmentalism & Elitism in railways, any reform brought in goes into vain".

Summary:

- Please acknowledge the reality and act accordingly. If you think this is how the railways runs (Authoritarian Administrative system, strictly following British colonial legacy), just ignore this.
- Considering the serious hustle & tussle between technical (IES) and non-technical (Civil) services this report may get misinterpreted. Don't know how Railway management and Railway officers will react/ respond to this (These piece of paper may do more bad than good, if it goes public).
- Better said than done, I know it is not as simple as it looks on papers to implement on the ground level to recalibrate the entire system, but some constructive steps have to be taken.
- So many levels/ different ways of entries into to the railways is also creating ambiguity in the organizational functioning. Prune down the tall bureaucratic hierarchy, bring uniformity in services.
- Management must try to bridge the gap between the officers and subordinates (already it has turned into a class divide among employees). No job is superior, no work is inferior, every person's job is important. Everyone has a job to do, and has to discharge his/her duties well on the job, then only the organization can function smoothly. Officers come and go but it is the system that stays.
- Improve the promotional aspects & work culture in IR. End the master and slave working culture. Structural reforms brings in cultural reforms.
- Always keep space for new minds to come in, it has to be a continuous process of inducting young minds, train them well (Half knowledge is more dangerous in railways).
- Appropriate training interventions and suitable empowerment through delegation of powers will have a huge impact on employees. Employee empowerment is one of the important components of shaping a strong work culture in the organization.
- If you can't recruit adequate staff, then please stop creating these tyrants/demigods.
- Let us question the hegemony of the UPSC officers in Indian Railways. Officers Elitism, Feudal mindset of one-upmanship has to go off (Elite mindset). Let us fight to liberate the Indian Railway administration from colonial mindset and break the 'Colonial Shackles'.
- I may have crossed my limits, forgive me for that. I am just a cog in the wheel. My only intention is to convey the intensity of the issue. Please ignore any grammatical mistakes. Many may not agree/subscribe to my views on Indian railways. The lens through which I have seen the railways may be faulty, correct me if I have a wrong perspective about IR (If in case I have a misconception/misinterpretation about railways).

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Sarve jana sukhino bhavantu